

Family Devotions
FOR
SUNDAY EVENINGS,
Throughout the YEAR:
BEING
Practical Discourses,
WITH
Suitable Prayers.

VOL. II.

By Theophilus Dorrington.

The Third Edition, Revised.

L O N D O N,

Printed for John Wyat, at the Rose in
St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1703.

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Practical Discourses



Suitable for Private

VOL. II.

By Thomas Dowling

The City of London, Printed

at the Press of

Printed for John W. at the Sign in
 St. Paul's Church-yard

T H E
Subjects of the following Discourses.

Sermon I.

A Grief and concern
for other Mens
Sins urged and directed,
Page 1

Sermon V.

The last Judgment
proved and represented,
p. 78

Sermon II.

Religion necessary
and useful to a comfortable
Death, p. 19

Sermon VI.

The Excellency of
Holy Scripture proved
and appli'd, p. 101

Sermon III.

The Resurrection
of our Bodies represented,
proved and applied, *part I.* p. 37

Sermon VII.

Repentance urged
from the Coming of
Christ, p. 122

Sermon IV.

The Resurrection
of our Bodies represented,
proved and applied, *part II.* p. 58

Sermon VIII.

Of Religions Meditation,
p. 142
Proper for a Fasting-day.

Ser-

The Subjects of the Discourses.

Sermon IX.

*The MESSIAH is
come, p. 162
Proper for Christmas-
day and the Sunday
after, when the day
it self is not on a Sun-
day.*

Sermon X.

*The Love of God
the Father to Mankind
in giving his Son, illu-
strated and applied,
p. 182
For the Sunday after
Christmas, when this
falls on a Sunday.*

Sermon XI.

*The Love of God
the Son to Mankind,
illustrated and appli-
ed, p. 202
A Sacramental Medita-
tion.*

Sermon XII.

*The Danger and
Unreasonableness of
following a Multitude
to do evil represent-
ed, p. 221*

Sermon XIII.

*That the Calami-
ties of the World are
God's Judgments, pro-
ved and appli'd, p. 239*

A GRIEF and CONCERN for other Mens Sins Urg'd and Directed.

Let us Pray.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psal. 119. 158.

*I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved;
because they kept not thy word.*

OUR Blessed Saviour puts together the Abounding of Iniquity and the Decay of Charity, as things that do usually go together, and have a dependence upon each other, *Matt. 24. 12.* And the truth of this may very easily be observed; That where-ever, in any single Person, or in a Nation, there is a great deal of Wickedness, there is also a proportionable defect of Love, both to God and Men. And there is a reason for that in the nature of the thing; for all Religion is but love variously exercised; and Wickedness is want of Love. From hence it comes to pass also, that when Wickedness is grown very common and frequent, it is as common for People to be unconcerned at it, and to be without any Sorrow or

B Trouble

Trouble for it. These things we see sadly verified in our unhappy Age. Iniquity does wofully abound among all sorts of Men; and this Instance of the Decay of Charity does every where appear too, that there is very little concern or trouble amongst us for that it does so abound. Many boast of their own Sins, and take pleasure in those that follow the same: *They rejoyce to do evil themselves; and delight in the frowardness, or perverseness, of the wicked,* Prov. 2. 14. It is the Diversion of some to debauch and corrupt others; 'tis what they endeavour earnestly, and boast of if they can accomplish it. So as Solomon says, *'Tis a sport to a fool to do mischief,* Prov. 10. 23. That which deserves to be regarded with the greatest Horrour and Detestation, that which is the greatest Harm and Prejudice to their Neighbour, gives them their devilish and malicious Delight and Satisfaction. If Men do at all resent the Wickedness of the World, 'tis usually only that they suffer from which they resent; and that too, because they suffer from it: Or they hate one another for the faults which they observe and study to find in each other, without any detestation of the Faults themselves: For they many times run themselves into the same Faults which they condemn and exclaim against in their Neighbours. And several Parties, out of opposition, run from each other into Faults of contrary Extreams: So that it is not Sin and Wickedness which such Men, with all their specious pretences, do abhor and are angry at; but only this or that Sin which is contrary to some darling Humour of their own, or to their worldly Interest; as they have chosen to place their Interest. If then we speak of those who are unconcerned or unduly concerned at the Wickedness of the Age, we speak of the greatest part of Men. And this proceeds from and proves that great decay and want of Love to God and our Neighbour, which does always necessarily accompany abundant Wickedness.

But

But the quite contrary to this is, The Disposition of all pious and good Men. Even that which the *Psalmist* expresses concerning himself in the words of our Text, when he says, *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word.* When a Man is very careful of his own ways, when he hates all manner of Wickedness for its own sake, and avoids it in his practice, then he is deeply affected and troubled at the Wickedness which he observes in the world: And it troubles him as *wickedness*, not only as *hurtful to himself.* David was grieved at the Transgressors, because they were Transgressors, *because they kept not the Law of God.* So often does he express an uneasie sense of other Mens Sins, that it appears to have belonged to the very habit and temper of his Mind. In *Psal.* 101. 3. he says, *I hate the Works of such as turn aside.* In *Psal.* 119. 104. *I hate every false way.* In *Verse* 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law.* Thus also was the righteous Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the Sodomites among whom he dwelt, as is said of him, *2 Pet.* 2. 7. And many other like Instances the Scripture affords us.

It shall be the business of the present Discourse to recommend and urge this temper of Mind which the *Psalmist* here expresses; and then to direct it, or to shew how it should be qualified.

In the first place, I shall endeavour to recommend and urge a Grief and Trouble of Mind for the Wickedness which we must needs observe in the World. And to this purpose I shall make it appear, that the Love of God does oblige us to this, and the Love of our Neighbour.

I. The Love of God does oblige us to this, and require it of us. If indeed we have a true Love to God, this will attend it; and we must not pretend to love him, without being grieved at the Sins of Men. Does not Love unite Concerns and Interests?

Is it not in the nature of this to wish all good things and all that will please, to him whom we love? And must it not, by consequence, be grieved and troubled at what happens that is displeasing to him and contrary to his Interest? If we truly love God, must we not hate that which is most contrary to his very Nature, and that which he does himself abhor? Especially when his hatred is so infallible and just as it must needs be. Love to God must needs be concerned for his Honour and Glory, and must wish that all Men would honour and serve him. It is expected from us by him that we have such a Concern as is intimated in the Lord's Prayer, where we are directed to say, *Hallowed be thy Name*. And we pretend to have this Concern when we say that Prayer, and do oblige our selves to have it, when we pretend to it. But then, if we are concerned for his Honour, as Love and Duty oblige us to be, we must be grieved for whatever does dishonour him. It must deeply affect us to see Men rebel against the common Sovereign of the World; to see them refuse to pay him his just Right; who is the righteous God; and be ungrateful to so good and bounteous a Benefactor; refusing to reverence, and esteem, and love absolute and incomprehensible Perfections. A truly loving Soul must often have in it such wishes as these which did proceed from such an one; *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness; and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Let the people praise thee, O Lord; yea, let all the people praise thee. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.* Such an one then, with the good Prophet, must needs weep in secret places for the Wickedness which he observes in the publick, *Jer. 13. 17*. Thus we see that the Love of God does oblige us to this.

2. Let us now see how the Love of our Neighbour does so too. The Apostle *Paul* makes it one of the glorious and inseparable Characters of Charity, that

that it *does not rejoyce in iniquity*, 1 Cor. 13. 6. And without doubt he said this by the direction of a divine and infallible Spirit. It cannot be that a Man can have any true or wise Love to his Neighbour; and yet at the same time endeavour to debauch him, or rejoyce in his Wickedness. It is never Love to him, though that is sometimes pretended, but the basest Self-love or Malice that does either of these. He seeks only the satisfaction of his own vile desires who does thus, or pleases and delights himself at the cost of his Neighbour's disparagement and mischief; which is certainly an Instance of the greatest Malice. But I shall make this evident, That the Love of our Neighbour requires our great Grief and Concern for his Wickedness, by the following Particulars.

I. It must have this Effect in us, because of that Vileness and Disparagement which Men bring upon themselves by their Wickedness. They make themselves certainly vile and contemptible in the Sight of God, and in the Account of those bright Hosts of Angels that delight and count it their Glory, to do his Will; and therefore they do really become vile in themselves. Wickedness will, in spite of all the endeavours of prophane Wit and Flattery, rather disparage a Man's Titles than receive Credit from them. The Light of Nature discerns a Baseness in it. Hence it is that all pretend to something or other of Vertue; and Men will hardly endure to have the Vices imputed to them which they constantly commit. A common Drunkard would take it as an Affront to be called a Sot; he that customarily swears, will not be accounted prophane and atheistical; he that will readily swear a multitude of false Oaths, and is prodigal of fallacious Promises, will not endure the Imputation of a Lye. No Man can endure the true Names of his Sins, though he loves the Sins themselves; which shews that

Reason and Conscience condemn them, and that they are shameful and disparaging things. Let who will be given up to Vice, he shall live undesired, and die unlamented by all Men; though he may be flattered, he is not truly respected; and when he dies, his Name stinks as soon as his Carcase, and his Memory rots. Vice in every Man, of whatever Rank or Quality, is rash and foolish; Vertue is considerate and wise; Vice is giddy, impotent and inconstant; Vertue is steady and strong; Vice makes a Man empty and useless at least, perhaps mischievous and intolerable: There is certainly nothing truly excellent and great to be expected from a Man of exorbitant Lusts and Passions. Uncleanliness is a sordid, brutish Sin, let who will be guilty of it. Drunkenness equals a Beggar and a Lord. Perfidiousness and Falshood is cowardly and Base. Swearing and prophane Talk are a rude Contempt and Affront of the Divine Majesty, and that as it were in his own House and Presence: And when it breaks out in the Company of those who profess a due Reverence for the great God, 'tis a Transgression of the common Rules of Civility, and therefore is unbecoming one that would but pretend to Good-breeding and to be Genteel. All Wickedness is a common vulgar thing, that which every Man can easily attain to. But eminent Vertue, strict Piety, and ardent Devotion, are great and uncommon things; they must be endeavoured for, and are the things that are truly Right Honourable. And as VVickedness levels the great Man and the mean one in their mind and disposition, so it often does the same thing in the matter of Estate too. Extravagant and enormous Vices can waste the largest Revenues; they debase the Honourable, impoverish the Rich, and put a shameful end to Families that have been honoured and renowned for many Ages. But now, Are not these things really grievous to

be

behold? And, Must it not trouble him that has Charity or Humanity, to see them? VVould it not grieve a Man, if it were considered, to see how Mens Vices stupifie and unman them, and how level with the Beasts they render the noble Creature Man? To see an Immortal Soul utterly forgetfull of all its Dignity; Reason abandoned, and VVisdom despised, while *Men* dote on the felicities of *Brutes*, and affect to be but a finer sort of them; and abhor to think or consider which is their glory, *and glory in sensuality which is their shame!*

Nor is Wickedness and Vice only a private and particular Disparagement, but 'tis a publick one too, when it becomes common and publick: And though this may give Confidence to particular Persons in their Enormities, yet it will certainly bring Disparagement and Shame upon the Community: And *Sin is* and will always be *a reproach unto any people*. Does not the present State of our unhappy Nation but too evidently prove this? What is it exposes us to the scorn of a Nation, which our brave Ancestors could often subdue? What is the Reason that we are so long concerned in a VVar with them, and that with assistance too, and they are not yet conquered? The evident reasons of these things are, That we are weakned by Factions, and dividing into Parties, and by disobedient ungovernable Principles; and are effeminated and softened by Vice and dissolute Manners. VVe seem indeed to have made a shameful exchange with our Enemies, and that they have gotten our wonted Courage and Bravery, and we their sneaking and effeminate Vices. If we go on in our Folly, it must be seen that *England* is become the *tail* and *scorn* of *Europe*, and we must seek to some potent Neighbour for Protection, instead of being able as heretofore to *give* Protection our selves to *Distressed States*. But these things must be too uneasie to be insisted upon, if a man has any love to his Country.

2. Love to our Neighbour requires our concern and trouble for the common VVickedness upon the account of those Judgments from God, that this is likely to pull upon men. He that believes the Word of God and reads it, and observes the terrible Threatnings therein denounced against the Sins of Men: And that is also but a little acquainted with the History of times, and knows thereby how severely the great Judge and Governor of the World has made good those Threatnings; how often Floods, Fires, Wars, Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes, have scourged the wicked and rebellious World; he cannot chuse but be troubled to see men running upon such things, endeavouring to make themselves miserable and provoking the Divine Thunder and Vengeance: He cannot chuse but fear, when he sees a Nation generally corrupt and wicked, and not tending towards any Reformation, that some dreadful Calamities are coming towards them too, and that they are tending towards ruin: And whatever great and peculiar Instances of God's favour may appear to have been shewn towards any People: These, rightly considered, are an argument the rather to expect his Wrath and Vengeance upon them, if they become generally and obstinately wicked; according to what he said by his Prophet to the *Jews*, *You only have I known of all the Families upon earth*, that is, I have chosen you to partake of very peculiar and extraordinary Favours, *therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities*, *Amos 3. 2.* And indeed the Iniquities of those that have been most obliged are the most aggravated and provoking. If ever any Nation in the World had encouragement from the kindness of God towards them to expect that they might escape unpunish'd in their Sins, the Nation of the *Jews* had: Indeed notwithstanding the Divine Threatnings, they did expect this, and so betrayed themselves into a great deal of presumptuous

tuous Wickedness, which brought upon them the Miseries that they would not fear: And God suffered his own Temple among them, which they thought should stand as long as the World, to be laid in Ruins; and Heathen Enemies to trample upon his own Worship, and to lead his peculiar People Captive from the Land, which by a long Series of Wonders he had given them possession of. And then, as the sad Prophet complained, who fore-told and warned them of these things in Vain, *The ways of Sion mourned, because none came to her solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests did sigh, her virgins were afflicted, she was in bitterness: her adversaries were chief, her enemies prospered: for the Lord had afflicted her, for the multitude of her transgressions,* (says he,) *her children were gone into captivity before the enemy,* Lam. 1. 4, 5. This was the sad event and consequence of their Wickedness: And any Man may justly fear that the same Calamities may be the bitter fruits of ours, if this be not prevented by a speedy Repentance: And therefore may justly be troubled and concerned, to see how obstinately and incorrigibly still we go on to continue and increase the Divine VVrath against us.

3 But yet farther; the Love we owe our Neighbour requires our deep trouble and concern at the VVickedness of other Men, because of those dreadful and eternal Punishments that are prepared for Sinners in another World. If we see a man carelessly going on in Sin, and hardening himself in his wickedness; we see him going down to Hell too, and endeavouring to secure himself a Place there. May we not justly be grieved to see a man giving the Devil, his mortal Enemy, full power over him, following his mischievous Allurements, and listning only to him as to a sure Friend? Should it not move a compassionate Grief, to see men chusing the pleasures of Sin, which are but for a short season, and in-

incurring thereby everlasting Pain and Sorrow ! Selling their Souls and forfeiting everlasting Happiness almost for nothing. To consider that the vain, transitory and short Enjoyments of this Life, are all the Portion of Good these careless Wretches shall ever enjoy, or that they mind to enjoy ! That they are posting towards an eternal State, and never think whither they are going ! That they must shortly leave all this world, and be entirely stript of all the gaudy circumstances that now amuse and entertain them, and go to those eternal Horrors, to that endless darkness, and those intolerable Torments which their Sins have deserved ! If we seriously consider the Sinner's case, we shall see that he plays with Fire while he plays with Oaths ; he swallows deadly Poison in his intemperate Cups ; he dances upon the brink of an eternal Lake of Brimstone in his guilty Frolicks. And would it not trouble even the hardest Heart to see a wretched Man raving mad, and in his madness cutting or stabbing himself, or eager to throw himself into a Fire ! And such as this is the sad Case of a desperate Sinner : He is set upon his own Ruin, resolved to destroy himself. God is infinite in Mercy, and desires not the death of a Sinner, but had rather that he should turn from his wickedness, and live : And he chuses to perish ; nothing else will serve him, but the sad Portion of eternal Damnation.

Thus, I think, it does evidently appear, that Charity obliges us to be concerned at the Sin and Wickedness that we observe in the World. And thus much shall suffice to urge and recommend this Temper of mind. I shall now proceed to what was next proposed to be insisted on : That is, To direct the Practice of this ; which is at least as necessary as the other. For indeed as some Men manage their Concern at the common Wickedness of the times, they do themselves greatly encrease it. Which that
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we may avoid to do in this matter, let us take care to observe the following Directions.

1. We must carefully avoid all rash and undue Censures of our Neighbours. We must take heed that we do not impute to them the Faults and Sins which they are not guilty of, by a perverse and mistaken Interpretation of their Actions. By a wrong Interpretation we may call that Evil which is good, and make our selves very guilty in the sight of God, by setting our selves unjustly against those things as evil, which are truly well-pleasing to him. There is a great deal of this false and erroneous Zeal amongst us, to our great disturbance. And yet farther; We should certainly be very cautious and sparing, especially in censuring the Actions of those that are above us; such Actions as we do not know all the Circumstances and Reasons of, nor perhaps is it fit we should. The humour and common practice of finding fault with our Governors is it self one of the greatest and one of the most mischievous faults of our time. If every one would study to be quiet, and do their own business in their private Stations, those in publick Offices would be able the better to perform theirs for the common good. But while every body gives himself leave to meddle, and censure, and to influence them by Talk and Clamour, we interrupt and hinder them, and can justly blame none but our selves for ill Successes.

2. In our resentment of the Wickedness of others we must take care that we do not fall our selves into the guilt of Slander and Backbiting, that we do not love to talk of what we think other peoples faults, and to publish and make them known to every one. It is the very guilty and common Entertainment of some People, and almost, all their Discourse together, to rail at their Neighbours, to detract from and disparage all that are not of their own Party, to smite their Neighbour secretly with the
Blows

Blows of a malicious and disdainful Tongue, while they pretend to be lamenting the Wickedness of the Times. To be often engaged in Talking against others, and finding fault with them, argues rather a Delight to expose and mention their Faults, than a true, charitable Grief for their commission of them. It proceeds indeed from Pride and Self-love to do thus, or from Malice and Revenge; and does tickle and gratifie these ill Humours. Such Persons *spite with the tongue* only, because they cannot do it with *the fist of wickedness*, and persecute with *cruel mockings*, because they cannot do it with *scourgings*. But rash Censure and Slander commonly go together; and the same Persons are usually very apt to judge ill and to report ill of their Neighbours. And this Practice of Slander and Backbiting is allowed, justified and cloak'd, with many, under the specious and demure Pretence of lamenting the Wickedness of the Times. These things therefore we must be aware of, that we may avoid them.

3. Our resentment of other Mens Wickedness must be free from Envy at the prosperity of the Wicked. There are many useful Directions for our behaviour in this matter in the 37th *Psal*m, of which this is one; for thus the good Man, who himself greatly resented the Sins of others, begins that *Psal*. *Fret not thy self because of evil doers; neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* We must not murmur against God, nor question his Providence, if any such do by his permission prosper for a while. We must acquiesce in the disposals of his Providence; and submit to them whatever they are; and not make our selves uneasy under them. We must not wish such Men harm, nor long to see God's Judgments overtake them; but should rather charitably wish, that they would see and amend their Sins, and prevent the wrath of God from falling upon them.

4. As we must avoid Envy at the Prosperity of Sinners, so we must be free from all Wrath and Hatred against their Persons. This says the *Psalmist* too, in the 8th Verse, *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thy self in any wise to do evil.* We must learn to distinguish between the Person and his Faults. *We*, I say, must do thus, who are in private Stations; and we should compassionate the Person while we hate his VVickedness. The Sins of others must not be prosecuted with our Malice and Revenge; no, not though they be Injuries against us. We must forgive them that trespass against us, as we would desire God to forgive our Trespasses against him. We must not design in our Prayers their mischief and hurt, who are our Enemies, but only our defence and deliverance from what mischief they design or endeavour to do us. Therefore our Church, according to the meek Spirit of the Gospel and the Pattern of our Master *Jesus*, directs us to pray, That God would *forgive our Enemies, Persecutors and Slanders, and turn their hearts:* And without any ill wish to their Persons it says again, *Abate their Pride, assuage their Malice, and confound their Devices.*

5. We must not suffer our Trouble and Grief for the Wickedness of the times, to deject our Minds, or bring us into Despair. This were an excessive, and indeed but a worldly Grief in all likelihood. We must, notwithstanding the Wickedness which we observe in the World, yet believe that God governs it. Though Sinners do that which he forbids, yet they do nothing but what he permits, and can overrule and does so to the producing what Events he pleases. He can make the Mischiefs which they design against others, turn upon themselves, to their own Confusion and Ruin. This the *Psalmist* says, *Psal. 37. v. 14, 15. The wicked have drawn out the sword, they have bent their bow to cast down the poor and*
needy,

needy, and to slay such as be of an upright conversation : Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bow shall be broken. We should consider that he can soon wither the greatest Prosperity of mischievous Sinners; that as he beholds *Mischief and Spite*, to requite it with his *Hand*, so he will very terribly do this in his due time. To this purpose the *Psalmist* says, *Tho' he has seen the wicked in great power, spreading himself like a green bay-tree*; yet he saw him pass away also, and lo he was not; and to that degree, that he could find no foot-steps of his former greatness. For a while did the Tribe of *Benjamin* prosper in the defence of their Wickedness; but they paid dear for their Sin, and for their Prosperity too at last. As they in all likelihood suffered much the worse for their former Successes, while these did more and more enrage their Enemies against them. So it has doubtless often happened to other Sinners, and may still do so to more.

6. In the last place, While we resent the Wickednesses of other Men, we must take care not to overlook or forget our own. These we should in the first place search for and lament, and purge our selves from them: Though the neglect of this is a very common fault in this matter: We pry into other Mens faults, and palliate or overlook our own. And many times, under pretence of putting away what is amiss, we do but lay our own dirt off our selves, upon our Neighbour's door; we blame him for what we our selves only are truly guilty of; this is common with the divided Parties among us. Let us consider, That we are not fit at all to censure other Men, till we have first censured and amended our selves. And our Saviour, *Matth. 7.* counts it an Hypocrisie, not to amend our selves first. It is true, That if VVickedness, as such, does really trouble and grieve us, as it is a Dishonour and Offence to God, and hurtful to Mankind; then, as
we

we are neareſt to our ſelves, we ſhall be concerned in the firſt place, to get our ſelves free from it. Thus much may ſuffice to direct our Grief and Trouble for the Sins of other Men.

I ſhall now conclude this Diſcourſe with only one Exhortation, which the Subject of it does very naturally and freely ſuggeſt. If it be fitting for us to be concerned and troubled at the Sins of other Men; then 'tis very fitting, and that which all ſhould do, to ſet themſelves in their ſeveral Places againſt the Wickedneſs of the World. It follows from hence, That every Man ſhould do, what he can, and what his Place and Station will allow him to do, towards the correcting and amending the Wickedneſs of the times, or to prevent the Continuance and farther Contagion of it. Every Perſon that has any others under his Care and Charge, or whom he has ſome authority over, ſhould earneſtly endeavour that they may not be infected with the common Wickedneſs; or if they are ſo unhappy, that they may be cured; theſe obligations to be troubled and grieved for other mens Sins, lay great Obligations upon Magiſtrates, to puniſh and reſtrain all manner of Wickedneſs to the utmoſt of their Power; and upon Miniſters, to reprove and condemn it zealouſly both by their Life and Doctrine: And alſo it requires all that are Maſters and Governours of Families, to make it their conſtant Care and Endeavour to diſcountenance, ſuppreſs, and prevent all manner of Wickedneſs in their ſeveral Families. I am not now ſpeaking either to Magiſtrates or Miniſters, and therefore it were impertinent to inſiſt and ſtay upon the urging them to what is their Duty in the Caſe: and indeed it is not ſo neceſſary as to urge the Duty of the Maſters and Heads of Families. The Magiſtrate has appeared againſt the common Prophaneneſs and Wickedneſs by Laws and Proclamations, and we are now ſo happy as to have a
Perſon

Person Supreme among us who discountenances and condemns all Vice, and recommends Piety and Virtue by her own most glorious Example. And Thanks be to God, our Church is well furnished with abundance of Exemplary Clergy, and such as do with strong Reason, and great Diligence and earnest Zeal, oppose the common Wickedness; But alas! All the while, the Care of Families is neglected; this is almost universally laid aside. To Instruct, to Catechize, to watch over the Family, to Reprove, to Exhort, to be concerned at all about the Manners, and Conversations, and the Religion of inferior Relatives, is sadly disused. And from this Neglect has our great Degeneracy chiefly sprung; and while this continues, the Laws and Proclamations of Magistrates will be in vain; and the most earnest Expostulations of Ministers will effect but little towards our Amendment. This then is that which does require to be insisted upon indeed more than the time will allow me to do it. Let those that are in such Stations reflect upon what has been now said, and see if it does not afford unanswerable Arguments for the Revival of Family Duties. If we will pretend to the Love of God, we must desire and endeavour, that as many as we can influence, may Love and Honour Him. If we will justly pretend to have any true Love for Children or Servants, we must do what we can that they may be happy and wise, and by consequence, that they be Religious. And methinks, the desire to have diligent and faithful Servants, and dutiful and comfortable Children, should make Men endeavour, that they be religious and fear God. If you truly love your Country, and do desire to see it honourably delivered from its present Afflictions, you must endeavour to prevent, or remove that which provokes the righteous God to chastise us. If this Neglect be it self a Sin, as, I think, is evident enough, and is the Occasion
of

of a great deal of other Wickedness, this must be repented of, this must be amended, or all our Prayers, and Fastings, and Endeavours to help our selves, are likely to be in vain. *God grant we may know the things that belong to our peace, before they are hid from our eyes: To whom be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

The PRAYER.

O Almighty God! Creator and Governour of all things both in Heaven and Earth. Thou hast made all things for thine own Glory; and all thy Works do shew forth the Excellency of him that made them. Every thing about us might put us in mind of thee and of thy Greatness, and help us to stand always in such awe, as to be restrained from Sinning against thee. But we are not mindful to receive any such Instruction or Admonition from them. We ungratefully forget thee amidst thy Benefits. We are possessed of an obstinate Enmity against thee even while we are every day furnished with Obligations to love thee. We know not Thee nor thy Ways, though we have the means of knowledge afforded us. Indeed, we care not for the knowledge of thy Ways. We love Darkness rather than Light, because our Deeds are evil. Thus are we, wretched Creatures, only fit and disposed for shame and misery. We know not the Excellency and Beauty of Holiness, nor the exceeding Vileness and Disparagement of Sin. We forsake the happy and glorious Rewards which we might obtain by doing well; and pursue those intolerable and everlasting Miseries which are justly designed the Punishment of Sin and Wickedness. O Lord, pardon, we pray thee, this our Perverseness, and pity this our mischievous Folly and Errour. Open our Eyes to behold the wondrous things in thy Law. Convince us that Religion and Vertue are our Wisdom and interest; that in keeping thy Commandments there is great Reward. That our most grateful and alluring Sins are not worth what they will cost us; that nothing truly good for us can ever be the natural Consequent and Effect of our Wickedness. Convince us that ways of Wisdom are ways of Pleasantness, and that those of Sin are odious to Thee, and ways of Perdition to ourselves; and so

turn us, we beseech Thee, from all that is evil. Make us to hate every false way, to cease the doing evil, and to learn to do well. Make us to love and fear Thee, and diligently to live after thy Commandments. Make us very severe against our own Faults, but compassionate towards our Neighbour. Teach us the Justice to love his Person, and to hate his Sins; that we may resemble Thee, who doest good to the just and unjust. Shed abroad thy Love in our hearts, that we may be so troubled and grieved for the common Wickedness, as may make us all, as we have power and opportunity, to strive to cure it. Make us always careful to amend first in our selves whatever we condemn in our Neighbours.

We implore thy Mercy upon all Men; beseeching Thee to send the sound of thy Gospel where it is not heard, and to prosper it where it is; that many may be turned from Sin to Holiness, from the ways of Perdition and Misery, to the ways of Happiness. Be merciful, we pray Thee, to the Land of our Nativity. Bless our Gracious Queen with all thy Spiritual and Temporal Blessings; prosper and continue long her Reign amongst us, to thy Glory and her Comfort and ours. Bless her and us, in able and wise Counsellors, in diligent and faithful Officers, in the continuance of a pious, learned, and exemplary Clergy: Keep the People, we beseech Thee, free from all false Doctrine, Heresie, and Schism; keep them from all Seditions, privy Conspiracies and Rebellions; from all that is contrary to their Duty, to Thee, and those whom Thou settest over them, and to the common Peace and Welfare. Make us deeply sensible of our past Transgressions, humble and patient under thy Chastisements; and give us Grace to amend our Lives according to thy Holy Word.

We thank Thee for our admission to thy House this day, for the words which we have heard; Lord, let them be attended with thy powerful Influence to our Salvation. We desire leave to commit our selves to thy protection in our lying down this night; for under the shadow of thy wings alone can we hope to have Safety. If it please Thee to continue our Lives, we pray, that it may be to thy Glory, and the Benefit of our Neighbour, and our own greater Happiness and Reward. Hear us, we pray Thee, and grant our Requests, for the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, in whose Words we comprehend all our desires, saying;

Our Father, &c.

RELI.

RELIGION

Necessary and Useful To a Comfortable Death.

Let us Pray.

PREVENT us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Psal. XXXVII. 37.

*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright,
for the end of that man is peace.*

THE Fears of Death are an uneasy Bondage to which this wretched Life is continually liable. And it must needs be so, because our present Life is always liable to Death itself. Innumerable Evils and Dangers constantly compass us about; and our frailty is such, that we are very easily destroyed: As well in our flourishing Youth and Strength, as in a decrepit old Age, our Life is a Flower that is easily blasted. And these fears whenever they do seize upon our Minds can

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greatly allay and imbitter the most pleasant circumstances of our Lives. We find men, for these reasons making what shifts they can against them, tho' they are commonly but very poor ones that they satisfy themselves with. Some strive to qualify and mitigate the trouble and uneasiness of these fears by putting the evil day far from them. 'Tis true, they will say, they must die, but they hope not yet for these many years. Some strive to put off the Fears of Death, by driving away the thoughts of it; they put these as much as is possible out of their Minds, and to that purpose keep themselves continually entertained with the businesses and pleasures of this Life. But in spite of all their Endeavours in this way, the thoughts and the fears of it will frequently return; a fit of sickness will bring a man into a relapse of these fears: sometimes the Funeral of an acquaintance, the sad Knells and the Graves of others will do it; or if he be alone in the dark and cannot sleep, these thoughts invade him: And it shakes and disorders all within a man to have a serious thought that he must die, tho' he does think it may perhaps be removed at the distance of some years from him. Thus do these remedies prove too weak for the disease. And besides, since we must die, whether we think of it or not, and our death continually approaches us, even while we put it far from us; we do in this way expose our selves to the very worst of Deaths, a sudden and unprepared one, while we strive against the fears of it: And so, while we cannot have the benefit from this course which we desire and design, we fall into a great Mischief which we are not aware of. Death steals upon us while we strive to forget it, and surprises us unprepared while we think of it afar off. It is then, certainly the best defence we can make against the fears of Death to prepare for Death it self, to put our selves into such a posture, if we can, as that

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when it comes it shall not be able to do us much harm; to fit our selves so to receive it, as that it may be really a gain and advantage to us. Such a preparation for Death every one of us may attain, if we take care about it. But most happy sure is that man who is in such a condition: He that is thus prepared to die, may live secure and fearless though innumerable Dangers and Deaths surround him. And such as this is the Condition of every religious and good Man; he is thus prepared to die, who has lived a Vertuous and Holy Life. This is that which the *Psalmist* says in the words of our present Text, *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace*: The End or Death of a good man is Peace; it is comfortable and easie; it is from tormenting fears, and is not attended with any considerable harm or damage. A Good Man as such, then, is fortified against the Fears of Death, and is provided so well for it, as that he may rather desire than fear it.

It shall be the business of this Discourse, to make good what the *Psalmist* here says: To shew how much a Good and Religious Life does conduce towards a comfortable and happy Conclusion: And to make this the more evident, I think it best to consider what there is that is most terrible and affrighting in Death, and then to shew, how a Religious Life does fortifie and comfort a Man against those things: And thus, I shall moreover evidence the necessity as well as the usefulness of a Religious Life to a Comfortable Death.

In the first Place, then, Let us take a view of Death, and consider what are the frightful and terrible things in it, the things which need some Support and Comfort: These may be set before us under the following Heads:

1. In Death we must part with all our dearest Enjoyments and Hopes in this World. He that has

raised himself to great Honours; or that would do so, and thinks himself in a probability to rise to them, must, when he dies, part with all his Titles or Offices of Honour, with all his Ambitious Prospects and Designs; *In that very day his Thoughts perish,* his Projects are at an end. He that has gathered the greatest Estate, will be stript of all in his Death, and must *go naked out of this World, as he came so into it.* He that has provided himself all the Pleasures of this World, must also leave at once all those charming trifles when he comes to die. None of these things can relieve a Man from Death, or continue and go with him, to afford him any advantage or Comfort from them in the other World. It is the great Ignorance of the *Indian* Heathens, to imagine that a Prince after his Death shall have the Attendance of his Servants, or the Conversation of his *Wives*, if they die together with him. The Holy Scripture does more truly represent to us the future State, in saying, *The rich man must leave his wealth to others when he dies; and the great man's pomp shall not follow him, his glory shall not descend after him,* Psal. 49. 10. 17. But when the Case is thus with a Man in Death, what will it avail him to have gain'd the greatest Measure of these things? the more he has of these, and the more he loves them, the more sad and grievous is the Period wherein he must part with them all. And many a Man when he has been come to this, has lookt back with Disdain upon all his Labour after such things; he has utterly despised all his most coveted Acquisitions, because he finds them so little profitable to him in an hour of such distress, and because he must needs part with them all. And especially does it wound a Man to think that he parts with these for Eternity, that he must never return to them again; he thinks he has enjoyed them but a very little while, and yet must enjoy them no more: His place here shall

shall know him no more for ever. Others then he must think shall take possession of his Wealth; Others must enjoy the Honour and Respect of his Titles and Offices; Others must take and use his pleasant Things. *If a man die, shall he live again?* says Job Chap. 14. 14. designing to intimate that no man shall live in this VWorld again.

2. Another grievous and terrible thing in Death is, the Dissolution which these our living Bodies must undergo. This sensible warm flesh must lose its Life and Motion, and become first a cold, stiff, senseless Carcase; when it has lain thus a very little while it putrefies and rots; it breeds VVorms, perhaps, that feed upon the Remainders of it, and at length turns to Dust. Every Man may say of himself; These Hands that now are employed in Works which credit or maintain me; These Eyes which behold the Beautiful Objects of this World; These Feet that now carry me where I now desire to be, must all ere long rot and turn to Dust. Whatever I love best in my self; whatever I am proud of or admire most in this Body, whether Beauty or Strength it must turn to shapeless, deformed, weak, and contemptible Dust. This is the inevitable Doom passed upon all Men for the first Sin: *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return.* If we visit the sick and see the beginnings of this Dissolution in the Effects of a prevailing Distemper, we cannot chuse but be troubled at the sad havock and change that we see it makes. Let Death arrest a mighty Emperor with a Mortal Sickness, and that it may do in the midst of his terrible Guards, and then you shall soon see him whose vast Kingdom was not large enough for him before, now confined to a Chamber, or a Bed. He that dazzled the Eyes of Beholders with the Splendor of his Robes, the Majesty of his Looks, and the rich Furniture of his Palaces, cannot now endure the Light: He that commanded mighty Ar-

mies, and could drive Nations before Him, is now become so weak, that a little child may afflict him. And after Sickness has thus triumphed over him, and committed him to Death, how ugly, and noisom, and contemptible does he then at the furthest become? *Let me bury my dead out of my sight*, said *Abraham* of her that had been the pleasant companion, and the delight of his Life. Those that loved the great man before, and haunted him, now dislike and fly from him; those that cringed to him, despise him; all grow weary and long to be rid of him. Oh sad and miserable end of human Glory and Felicity! This must be the end of the lov'd, indulged Flesh after all that has been done to content and please it. After all our Cares about *what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed*. And how vain and unprofitable will all those Cares be thought, especially in their excess, and how unprofitable the vast and superfluous provisions they have made, when the wretched Body sinks and dies under all! What will rich Cloaths signifie to one that must now be confined to Darkness and Solitude! What do dainty Provisions or plenteous Tables avail him, who now cannot endure the sight of what before was his Delight and Pride? His rich Wines he cannot relish, his costly perfumes he needs much still, but they cannot preserve him from Putrefaction and Rottenness. Very vain and empty of Comfort are all worldly accommodations at that sad Hour.

2. Another Grievous thing in Death, and that which is more grievous than all the rest, is the Departure of the Soul to a new and unalterable State of Happiness or Misery. If the dying Man expects to be still when his Body dies, and this the most Obstinate Atheist can hardly forbear to expect when he comes to die, then he must either be uncertain what his Condition will be, or he must expect to be
miserable.

miserable, unless he has from a Good and Vertuous Life through the Mediation of Jesus Christ, the expectation of being Happy; and what-ever his Condition is, he must think it will be unalterable and eternal. It is appointed to all Men once, and but once, to die, and so he departs to a new and unknown State, to a Condition he never tried, nor can have leave to try, but must endure it for ever, whatever it is. This must make Death very terrible either to him that is uncertain what his Condition will be, or to him that expects it will be miserable. Let us consider these two Cases a little, that we may have some sense of them before we come to die, and so may be awakned to take some care that we do not fall under either of them.

Suppose a Man at his Death uncertain what a sort of Condition it will commit him to; expecting very shortly to die, and to be after his Death either happy or miserable for ever, but he knows not which. How dreadful and amazing must that moment and period be which puts an end to all that he knows, and carries him to what he does not know! which settles and fixes his everlasting doom; and he knows not what that doom will be! His Condition is somewhat like that of a Man who were sentenced to have one cast of a Die, and but one, to determine whether he should be thrown into a flaming Caldron of melted Brimstone, there to continue in Torments many Ages; or were to be a glorious Prince, and enjoy as long all the Pleasures, the the Honours and Advantages of Empire! How anxious and solicitous would a Man be in such a Case! How would he tremble and fear to throw the important Cast! How much rather would he take the Assurance of a small and common fortune in this World, exposed to common Inconveniences and Troubles, than be depending between such mighty Things! The Condition of an uncertain Sinner at his

his Death is much worse than this, though somewhat like it. For he is depending between the Infinite Favour and the Wrath of Almighty God; between Heaven and Hell; a State of unconceivable and endless Joy and Happiness, or of endless and unconceivable Torment and Misery. And what will a Man's present condition in this World, with the greatest advantages of it, avail or profit him in such a Case as this? If the Cares about our future Condition in this life, which is but of short duration, and whatever it is, will soon be at an end, do yet often sit so uneasie upon our Minds, as to discompose our Thoughts, to break our Sleep, to waste our Strength, and deject our Spirits; What a heavy Load must this Care be, what shall become of us for ever when we are just upon our Departure from this life? What a terrible Anxiety must we lie under, when we know not what will be our Lot and Portion! When we have now no time left to ascertain it, no space remain to secure our Everlasting Happiness in! This is a very sad Case! but yet there is another somewhat worse than this.

And that is, when the dying Sinner expects to be everlastingly miserable hereafter. This will make his Death terrible and miserable indeed. To think, I am now going to appear before a Righteous and Holy Judge, who hates the Sins that I have lived in, who knows most perfectly what the course of my life has been; who has seen all the Affronts I have offered him; whose Mercy and Goodness I have abused; whose Wrath I have despised; whose Offers of Pardon and Salvation I have rejected: And by him I must be sentenced and ordered to the dismal Condition which this behaviour has deserved. I must then certainly leave my present loved Pleasures, for Pains and Torments; I must see this light of this Sun no more, but be confined to Eternal darkness; I must exchange my fine and convenient Dwelling

Dwelling for a loathsome, uneasie Prison; I must go from the attendance of Servants, from kindness of Friends, to a company of spiteful, enraged Devils; and shall be abandoned to their Wrongs and Abuses: who will deride, vex, and insult over my poor frightened, and tired, and trembling Soul; who will carry me to an abyss of Misery, where I shall be always tormented; where my Musick must be exchanged for Howlings; my Feast, for an Hunger never satisfied; my pleasant Cups, into an eternal Thirst; I must be chained down in Fires, bear the eternal Wrath of God, and burn for ever. To expect such a Portion as this at the Point of Death, is another Death to a Man. He will wish he were a Beast, a Worm, or a Toad, even the vilest and most contemptible Animal, rather than a Man, that he might avoid such terrible things. And surely in such a Case, no worldly Wealth or Honours, no gaudy Rooms, no vast Lordships, no outward Accommodations whatever will be able to afford a Man the least Comfort or give his Mind a moments repose.

Thus we see how terrible Death may be, and how vain, useles and uneffectual to the comforting a Man under it, all the best Enjoyments of this World are.

I now proceed to the *Second* part of the Discourse, which is to shew, That a good and religious Man is prepared for a Comfortable Death, notwithstanding that there are such terrible Circumstances which 'tis liable to. His End, notwithstanding these things, is Peace: It shall be free from the greatest of These Terrours and Evils, and shall be well enough provided for against those that will attend it: He shall feel only the lightest of the Evils mentioned, and shall have them too, mightily allayed by his preparation for them. For he has not this terrible Uncertainty, to torment him, which has been mentioned; nor is he afflicted with the killing Fears and Expecta-

Expectations of Misery. And though he also must leave his Enjoyments in this World, and suffer the same shameful and contemptible dissolution of his living body with other Men, yet will not these things be very grievous to him. The good Man, as such, is prepared to have a Happy and Comfortable Death by these things following.

1. He is in a good measure weaned from this World and the Enjoyments of it. He has learn'd, as he promised in his Baptism, to renounce the World, and the Poms and Vanities of it. He looks upon the present things as accommodations of his present life, and is thankful for them; but does not account them the best things that he was made to enjoy. His heart therefore is not set upon worldly things, but he has a reserve of Affection for better; and having made it his chief business accordingly to seek and secure better things, he cannot be much concerned at his parting with these. He is crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to him. He has studied and learned the Nature of worldly things, knows that they are empty, and cannot satisfy, that they are apt to promise more Content than they can afford, that they are mutable and transitory in their Nature, and upon many Accounts, an uncertain Possession; and therefore he does not suffer any great Desire, or Esteem of any of them to possess him; and as he knows that these things can never make him happy alone, so he has learned to think that he may be happy without them, even when he is separated from all things here. He, as the Apostle speaks of himself, *dies daily*. He considers himself but as a Pilgrim and Stranger on Earth, lives in continual expectation of dying, makes himself sensible of the continual approach of Death, and so inures his Thoughts to it, and makes it familiar to him. And as he mortifies his desires towards the things of this World, by frequent checking
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ing them and refusing to gratifie them when he may, so he learns himself to want these things and the fruit of this Endeavour must needs be a great Indifference towards them; and so far as he has an Indifference towards these things, so far is he fitted to die, and be called away from them. He that can forbear to use these things while he lives, is well prepared to depart contentedly from them by Death. This Wisdom the Light of Nature taught the Heathens. Hence a great Man among them could say, *Tota Philosophorum vita Commentatio Mortis est*, (Plato in Cic. Tusc. qu. 1. 1.) The whole Life of a Philosopher, or a good and vertuous Man, is an Essay or Practice of Dying. 'Tis a Meditation upon Death, or the inuring himself to it. Which Expression, another thus explains, (Cic. Ibid.) When (says he) we withdraw the Mind from sensual Pleasures and worldly Enjoyments, and from Affairs which are for the service of the Body; What is this, but to withdraw and recal the Mind from the Body, to learn to die, and to accustom our selves to a separate abstracted State? He certainly that has been wont to cross his own Desires, to govern and subdue his Appetites, and that knows how to want any worldly Comfort, and to be patient and contented under that Want, he knows also how to go contentedly from all things here. And these things are the Characters of a good and vertuous Man.

2. Such an one is also well prepared to die in the Assurance that he has of a very advantageous and happy Resurrection of his Body. The faithful Promise of God assures him, that his falling Tabernacle shall be built again, his scattered Dust shall be gathered and united, and the same Body which dies, shall revive; with the same Eyes that he now has he shall see his Kind and Glorious Redeemer. And the Earth or Sea, or whatever Element has any parts of his dissolved Body, they shall restore them, and

and give up their Dead. Wheresoever these are disposed, they shall from thence return, as the Scripture teaches us, and so proves the Resurrection of the same Body. And the good Man expects, as he is also allowed to do, that his Body, shall be raised with great Advantage: *That it shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, as is promised, Dan. 12. 3.* Yea, that it shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body, as is said, *Phil. 3. v. 21.* It is sown indeed in dishonour, but it is raised in Glory; 'tis now a frail, weak, mortal thing, but then shall be Immortal; 'tis now gross and material, but then shall be Spiritual; then it shall no more know hunger or thirst, nor uneasie cold or heat; it shall suffer no more pain sickness, no more fainting or weariness; and then too he shall be free from the uneasie, troublesome fears of Dying. And what Joy, what Consolation, is this Assurance full of! What Beggar (says one) would not willingly put off his old filthy rags upon an Assurance that he shall be cloathed again with a Prince's Robes? Who we may say, would not be contented and glad, that his poor, inconvenient Cottage should be pulled down, if he were assured it should be built for him again into a stately Palace? The good Man can say, Though Death will triumph over my poor Carcase for a while, because of Sin, yet I shall at length triumph over that for ever in a glorious Resurrection; *Thanks be to God, I shall gain an eternal victory over him at last, through Jesus Christ.* My Dust, however unknown and contemptible in the Eyes of Men, is precious in the sight of God, and well known to him, wheresoever it is scattered and whatever changes it may undergo. And he that made Man from the Dust at first, can easily raise me from thence again. Thus may such an one Comfort and Support himself under the Decays and approaching Ruin of his mortal Body.

3. A good Man is prepared to die with Peace and Com-

Comfort, in having the settled Expectations of entering upon a State of endless happiness at his Death. He knew this Life was given him for greater purposes, than to seek and enjoy the things of this World: And it has been accordingly the chief business of his Life to secure an Interest in better things. And these he knows himself now going to take possession of. He looks upon Death not as a King of Terrors, but as the Messenger of his heavenly Father, sent to call him home to Rest and Happiness. A great many Comfortable Thoughts may attend this Expectation of Happiness after Death; let us reflect upon a few of them.

The good Man can think with himself; If I leave the good things of this Life I leave the Evil ones too: I lose the Joys and the Sorrows both at once; and the Sorrows of this Life, the Troubles and Inconveniencies of it are more, and more sensible than the Joys: *Man is born to trouble*; but Death sets me free from it all. And this Life must be a continual Warfare and conflict with the Enemies of our Salvation: We can never be long quiet from their Sollicitations and Assaults; and it is a State of continual Fear and Danger; and without constant Watching and great Striving against these Enemies, we cannot possibly maintain our innocence. But all this War and Strife will be over at Death. The good Man is glad, then, when this is coming when he shall forget all his Labours, and be assured of his Vertues, and they shall render him happy to all Eternity.

Again, The good Man at his Death expects to go to an innumerable Company of Angels, and the Spirits of Just Men made perfect: He knows he shall leave a froward, envious and malicious World for a kind and loving One. If he leaves good and agreeable Company and dear Relations, he is comforted against this Loss, by considering the Company he shall go to, and knows that this Loss will be his Gain.

Gain. Of that Blessed Company he can say, Where I have one Friend in this world I shall have a thousand there. Love and Friendship are common Characters of that happy World, none there hate, none envy any others. The good Man does not now see the good Angels that attend him; but he expects that as soon as his freed Soul shall have cast off the Veil of Flesh, he shall find himself surrounded by those kind Spirits, who will be ready by the Divine Command to conduct him, as they did the Soul of *Lazarus* in the Parable, to the Abode of happy and good Souls where a great Number of those that are dear to him do expect him: VWhere Parents, perhaps, or Brethren, or Sons, or other near Relations; where good Neighbours and familiar Friends who are gone before, do expect and will be glad to receive him; who being secure of their own happy Immortality, were solicitous for His, as a learned Father and zealous Martyr speaks, (*Cyprian de Mortal.*) Among these he shall be received with great Joy and Welcome.

Further the good Man expects to be by his Death brought to a nearer and more joyful Communion with God, the Chiefest, and the Fountain Good. He expects to be in Paradise upon his removal hence, to have such an Enjoyment of the Infinite God, as to have no more need of the worldly goods which he must leave behind him; and it cannot grieve him much to leave them, when he shall have occasion for them no more, and when he shall enjoy better for them; he cannot want these Streams when he is possess of the Fountain Good: He cannot grieve for parting with the poor Pleasures of this VWorld, when *in his presence there is fulness of Joy, and pleasures for evermore.* If I shall see the pleasant light of this Sun no more, thinks he, I shall instead of it, have a bright and beatifick Vision of the light of God's Countenance: I shall have more of this there than

than here, and that is the thing which here has been my chief Desire and greatest Consolation. I shall have in his presence a happy Day of Communion which shall have no Clouds to Eclipse, no nights to interrupt it. Oh bright and glorious World, says he upon such Apprehensions, How I long to be there! *I desire to depart and to be with Christ? When shall I come and appear before God!* Now is such a man unhappy in his Death? Is not such an *End* abundant Peace! It is peaceful and calm, free from Fear or Trouble; and yet better than so, 'tis often attended by Vertue of these Hopes and Expectations with Joy and Triumphs.

This is the End and Death of the Perfect and Upright Man. And now can any of us forbear to say, *Oh let me die, the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his?* Who would not desire such a Death as this? Since we must all of us inevitably die, how desirous, how solicitous should we be for such a Death? How unreasonable is it to neglect preparing against so many, and so great Evils as that evil Day brings with it? Especially when 'tis possible that we may be so well prepared against them. But let us consider too, that we can be in no other way so well prepared to die, as by a religious Life: Nothing can possibly render our Departure hence so tolerable, so desirable, as the Hopes and Expectations which that affords. Let us, then, resolve that we will live the Life of the Righteous; that we will endeavour to glorifie God with what he gives us of the good things of this World, and lay up a treasure in Heaven by good Works and Exercises of Charity. *Let us be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; as knowing that our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

To conclude: Since it is easily demonstrable, and evident, even to sense, in a thousand Instances, that a religious and virtuous Course of Life is most

happy, most for our Credit and Ease, our Tranquility and Comfort while we live, it is unquestionable Wisdom to be religious and vertuous; and he has no just Claim or Pretence to Wit that is not so. There is none but the good man that wisely and certainly prosecutes his true Interest and Happiness. There is no man but he, that makes his Life truly pleasant and comfortable, or that can have a cheerful and comfortable End of it; Let us therefore *mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, and imitate and follow such an one; For his ways are ways of pleasantness, and the end of that man is peace.*

Now to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glory world without end.

The P R A Y E R.

O Lord the Infinite and Eternal God! Who art without Beginning or End, without Variableness or Shadow of change. Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth or the World; even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Thou Lord hast given Being to all things besides thy self, and thou delightest in the works of thy Hands; thou hatest nothing that thou hast made; nor didst make any thing at first with a purpose to unmake or destroy it; but that it should always remain to thy Glory. Yet O Lord thou turnest Man to Destruction: all our days are pass'd away in thy Wrath, we are consumed by means of thy heavy hand: We spend our days in Vanity, and in a moment go down to the Grave. This is the sad Doom pass'd upon all mankind, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.* This we cannot chuse but sadly lament, and yet we must be forced to say, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are all thy Judgments!* Thou hast set our Iniquities before thee, and our most secret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance: By our Sins have we deserved this heavy Fate, and far worse than this. We humble our selves before thee, O Lord, and do patiently accept of this Punishment of our sins. And since we know, that to the Lord our God belong Mercies and Forgivenesses, though we have rebelled

rebelled against Thee, we humbly seek thy Mercy, we beg thy Favour in Christ Jesus, whom thou hast set forth to be a Propitiation for our Sins, through Faith in his Blood. O Lord, Pardon our Iniquities, and for thy Mercies sake, deliver us not into the bitter Pains of Eternal Death. Let us be Parrakers of his Merits; that as by our first Parents we are liable to Death, we may by him attain a glorious and happy Resurrection to Eternal Life. And teach us; we beseech Thee, so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto Wisdom. Direct us so to employ this Life, as to gain a better; so to pass through things temporal, as that we may not finally lose the Things that are Eternal. Let the unavoidable necessity of dying wean our Hearts from this World, and make us ready and disposed to part with it when Thou pleasest to call us away. Let it make us mindful of the eternal World into which our Death will translate us, that we may be very industrious to lay up a Treasure there, by Faith, and Love, and good Works, to relieve and comfort us when we go hence. And now let us be industrious while Time lasts, to glorifie Thee, and work out our Salvation, because that night approaches in which no Man can work. Lord, Let us not squander away our precious Days in Idleness and Sloth, nor in doing Ill; but grant us the Grace so to employ them, as may be comfortable to us in our Dying Hour. O Lord, have Mercy upon us, and afford us against that time the assured hopes of a joyful Resurrection, and everlasting Happiness. That we may then resign up our Souls into thy Hands with Peace and Comfort.

We recommend to thy Infinite Mercy all sorts and conditions of Men. Oh! Let thy glorious Gospel which brings Life and Immortality to Light, shine into all Nations, and guide their Feet into the way of Peace and Happiness. Bless and defend the Universal Church: Grant it to flourish greatly and abound in all Grace, and Good Works: Let them prosper that love it and seek its Welfare; and let its Enemies be scattered. Let the Light of thy Countenance rest upon the Nations to which we belong, and give peace and plenty of all temporal good Things; and great Increase of Piety and Vertue. And be Thou our Defender, O Lord, from all our Enemies. We pray Thee, let thy Servant *Anne* our Queen be always under thy Direction and Care; Let her study to promote thine Honour; and do

Thou maintain and encrease hers. Prosper all her Undertakings for thy Glory and our Welfare. Teach us all who are subject to her, to pay all due Obedience. We earnestly desire for all that are related to us such Grace as may render them wise unto Salvation, and such Temporal Blessings as shall seem to Thee most expedient for them. Finally, O Lord, we beg thy Pardon for the Sins of this day, thy Blessing upon the means of Grace we have enjoyed; let them bring forth fruit in us to Eternal Life Watch over and protect us in our Sleep; raise us the next morning with Health, and a due readiness to the performance of all our Duties. Let us constantly see thy Goodness to us in the Land of the Living, and spend our days to thy Glory, that when we go hence, we may come to dwell in thy Joy thro' the mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our only Saviour.

OUR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the Glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

THE

T H E

Resurrection of our Bodies

Represented, Prov'd and Applied.

The First Part.

Let us Pray.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

John 5. 28, 29.

Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

And shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

TH E S E words are part of a Discourse which our Blessed Saviour held with the *Jews*, to teach them who he was. In it he very plainly sets himself to discover to them his Divine Nature ; and to let them know, That he was God as well

well as Man. In the 17th. Verse of the Chapter He had spoken of God as his Father, and this farther enraged the *Jews* against him; because they apprehended that in saying, God was his Father, he made himself equal with God; or, which is all one, he made himself God. He does not set himself to shew, that they misunderstood his words, but to justify his own words, and to confirm that Interpretation of them as a true one; for through the whole following Discourse he equals himself to the Father in several things. He asserts a constant co-operation between the Father and Him in Verse 19. A Communication of Counsels, Designs and Works, or a mutual Consciousness in Verse 20. He ascribes to Himself the Power and Authority of the Father, for Raising the Dead to Life, for Judging all Mankind, ver. 21. 22. He shews the same Adoration and Worship to be due to Him that is due to the Father, Verse 23. He attributes to himself the Power and Authority to raise unto a spiritual and divine Life those wretched Mortals who are sunk into an animal and sensual one, in Verse 25. In our Text He attributes to himself again that which is certainly an Act of equal Power and Authority with the Creation of Mankind, that which none but a God and a Creator could do. And he goes on beyond this in the same Strain of Discourse to compare and equal Himself to the Father.

But let us now confine our Meditations to these two Verses and the great Subject of them.

Marvel not at this; that is, Let not the things which I have said seem Incredible to you, nor lay a Prejudice or Offence in your Minds: For I must tell you that which is more wonderful; I might well enough ascribe to my self the managing of the Last Judgment, since I have Power to raise the Dead.

The hour is coming. It is observable, he does not add those words, *and now is*, as in ver. 25. which shews
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he does not speak here of the same thing. He does not speak of that spiritual Resurrection which the Voice of his Gospel should from that time frequently effect in the World; but of the general Resurrection of the Bodies of Men at the End of the World. To confirm this Interpretation, we may observe also that he says in this Resurrection, some should rise again to Condemnation: But he had told them before, That they who would *hear his word, and believe on him that sent him*, that is, such as should be raised to a spiritual Life, they *shall not come into Condemnation*, Ver. 24. And further we may observe that he speaks of those who should enjoy the Resurrection unto Life, as having done good before; but before the Spiritual Resurrection, no Man does good; since in the Scripture phrase such are *dead in trespasses, and sins*, Eph. 2. 1.

In the which, all that are in the Graves shall hear his voice: By this Expression he means, All that are in the State of the Dead: They shall hear *his Voice*, that is, the Voice of the Son of Man, or the Son of God, meaning Himself, who is both. There shall, he intimates at the last Day, be proclaimed a loud Summons and Command, for all the Dead to Arise and Live again; which shall either be spoken by Himself, or by some Angel at his Command and Appointment, as some other Scriptures intimate. But if this Summons be Proclaimed by some Angel, yet may it be said to be *his Voice*, since it will be proclaimed in his Name and by his Appointment and Direction.

And shall come forth. With that Summons shall be exerted his Divine, Creating Power to the raising of the Dead. And this shall ransack every Element, search every private Corner of the World, and gather the Dust of human Bodies, wheresoever that is scattered and dispersed, and make them Live again. And such a Power may as well attend this Summons if it be proclaimed by an Angel in his Name, as if

he pronounced it Himself; even as the mighty Power of God attended the motion and touch of *Moses's* Rod when he used it at the Command and Appointment of God.

They that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. By this Division he includes all Mankind that will be then Dead, and tells the very different Fates of Men in this Resurrection. How well it shall fare with some, and how ill with others. He intimates the Design and End of the Resurrection, which is, That all Men may receive according to what they have done in the flesh, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Thus we see here the Doctrine of our Resurrection most evidently asserted by our Saviour, and therein assured. A Doctrine which is certainly of great Importance, and very fit to be believed and considered, if it be true, and which may be of great use to us for the direction and comfort of our Lives.

Because much objection has been made against this by Infidels and Hereticks, and it has been called in question by one Heresie which would now fain prevail: And sometimes the Faith of it in good Christians may perhaps by the Art and Subtilty of Temptation and Objection be staggered and weakned: I shall therefore employ much of this Discourse to confirm and prove the truth of it. And that the Confirmation of this may be the more plain and convincing, I shall proceed in this method. I shall represent or state the Doctrine of our Resurrection in sundry Particulars, and add to each of them severally such confirmation as Holy Scripture and our own Reason will afford.

1. The first of which Particulars shall be this, *That the Resurrection of the Dead is only a Resurrection of the Body.* It is that which falls, and dies, which is to be raised to life again; and therefore whenever the

the Scripture speaks of a raising again from Death, it must be understood to belong only to the Body, since that only part of a Man does fall and die. The Scripture it self teaches us to understand thus of this Matter, when it says, as in *Eccles. 12. 7.* of a dying Man, *Then the dust returns to the Earth as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it.* The Soul of Man does not die, that Spirit is immortal, and lives and acts while the Body is dissolved. Another Habitation is prepared for it, to which God the Creator and Sovereign Judge of all things disposes it; where it dwells in a great measure of Happiness or Misery, according as it has lived well or ill with the Body. This our Saviour teaches us in the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, *Luke 16.* And the Apostle shews, That he expected to be even while his Body lay dead and that he expected a State which would have some very great and very desirable Advantages of this, when he says, *Phil. 1. 23.* That he had a *desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better* for him than to stay here. And we may observe to this purpose, that our Saviour in our present Text does not say, All that are *ἐν τῷ αἵματι*, but *ἐν τῇ σαρτί*. He does not use the word which commonly signifies the State or Place of the separate Soul, but that which never signifies any other Place than the Sepulchre or Grave of the Body. So that it is plainly the Resurrection of the Body which is here spoken of. Now to help our selves to believe the Resurrection of our Bodies, and that the Soul shall not always live unbodied after Death, we may derive these Reasons or Arguments for it from what the Holy Scripture teaches us.

(1.) We may justly conclude this from the Nature and Frame of the Human Body. The Creator did with admirable Wisdom build this Body from the Dust of the Earth: He contracted in it all the Beauties and Wonders of the greater material World: He intended

intended it to exercise a Dominion over the Beasts of the Earth, the Fowls of the Air, and the Fishes of the Sea; and gave all these, and all the Plants of the Earth to its use and service. He intended and fitted it to be the Habitation of an Immortal Spirit. Now from these things we may very probably and reasonably conclude, That it was in the wise Creator's design intended for a much longer duration than now it commonly has. We cannot easily think that he made it so wonderful, and gathered so many Excellencies into it, and yet intended it should endure but a very few years, and then fall for ever into Dust again: Or, that Creatures far less excellent than it, and made for the sake and service of it, should yet be more durable, and of a firmer Constitution and Make. We know that the Beasts and the Fowls of the Air do live several of them much longer than we commonly do, and Trees, many of them, outlast many Generations of us, Since he designed humane Bodies for the Habitations of immortal Souls, 'tis reasonable to believe, he intended too, that the Body should also be immortal, and that these should never be thus separated for each other as in our Death they are. Though our Bodies are now curst and doom'd to dust and dissolution for our Sin; as this was not originally intended, so we may reasonably believe, that they shall not for ever remain dissolved, or the Creator's design in making them, be utterly lost and frustrate. That he will quite throw away what was made so wonderful and excellent, or lose the Glory of this part of the Creation by an utter destruction of it.

(2.) From the Nature of the Soul of Man we may reasonably believe that it shall not always live without a Body. As we have before seen reason to believe that the Soul it self lives; so we may farther see reason to believe that it shall not always live unbodied. This is indeed an immortal Spirit; but
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is a distinct sort of Spirit from those who are made to live without Bodies ; and is in its Nature and original Frame suited and designed to dwell in a Body. In the Account which *Moses* gives us of the Creation of Man, we may plainly see this. For he tells us, That the Body was first made and intended to be the Habitation of an immortal Soul, and that when that was ready prepared, the Soul of Man was at the same time made and put into it. He says, *The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and with this, man became a living soul*, Gen. 2. 7. It is God that still forms the spirit of man within him, but in a different way now : Having by the Law of Nature established a propagation of this kind, in and with the formation of them ; he now raises it from the matter of our Bodies by a mighty but a common concurrence, with the Natural Causes of our Generation ; and so he gives the Soul of Man its first being in a Body, and in actual Union to it. Now that he should make the Soul immortal, as doubtless it is, and design and fit it to dwell in a Body, and yet after a little space call it away, and make it for ever live without one, is incongruous : That he should continue it for ever in a state of Imperfection, as without a Body it is, an uncomplete Being, and a part only of a *Being*, is not suitable to Him *whose work is always perfect*. We may justly conclude then, that the Soul shall return to a Body and for ever live with one after a little space of separation from it. We can easily find out reasons enough agreeable to him ; and by the Light of Holy Scripture, for the temporary separation of the Body and Soul ; but we cannot find any for an eternal one : And if we attempt to go further with our Reason than the Light of Scripture reaches in this matter we shall certainly prove, by our wandering, our unsteady course, and our frequent falls into palpable error, that we walk blind-

blindfold. But this Argument will be farther confirmed by the next.

(3.). From the Judgment to come, which is the end of the Resurrection, we may reasonably gather that there will be a Resurrection of Bodies. It is said of that, *That all shall stand before the tribunal of Christ, to receive what they have done in the flesh, whether it be good or evil.* Can we think that the Soul shall be judged for what is done in the Body without a Body? The Soul alone cannot equitably be judged for the Deeds which the Body concurr'd in. The Flesh and Body is not only an Instrument of the Soul, but tis a part with that of the Man, and so does truly share in the good or evil Actions of the Person. Besides, As the Body does concur in the Actions of the Man, so it does perhaps often instigate, and sway, and induce to the sins which the Man commits, and therefore it must in equity be punished together with the Soul for them. No Man can receive according to what he has done in the Flesh, unless both Body and Soul partake in the Reward, as they do in the Actions of the Person. The Body as joined to the Soul, is capable of Holiness and of Wickedness, as the Scripture it self teaches us, when it speaks of some Mens being *sanctified and preserved without spot, or blameless, in Body, Soul, and Spirit*, 1 Thess. 5. 23. and bids others *cleanse themselves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit*; 2 Cor. 7. 1. And then the Body as well as the Soul, is a fit and capable Subject of Reward or Punishment; whence we may conclude, It shall rise again, to partake of the one or the other. If it lies eternally dissolved, as it receives no Reward for doing well, so it feels no Punishment for doing ill.

Farther; the Soul of Man, by reason of its natural disposition towards dwelling in a Body, may be rewarded or punished by the good or ill Condition of the Body tis joined to; and a great Addition to
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its Happiness or Misery may be made thereby. Since therefore the future state is that which is chiefly designed for retribution, and it is certain, That Men shall there receive the full deserts of their Actions done here; it is without doubt, That the Soul shall not be rewarded or punished without a Body. It is very reasonable to expect, that it shall be punished with the contempt and torment of that, when through inordinate Love and Indulgence of that, it has been drawn into Sin. And that it shall be rewarded in the Happiness of that Body which it has employed with great diligence in well-doing, and whose gratification it has often slighted and forsaken, that it might the more honour God, and be stedfast in its Duty. The Body of a good Man may be separated from his Soul for a while, to perfect the Cure of Worldliness and Sensuality in him; and then that may be joined to it again, to compleat the Felicity of such a sort of Creature with the Happiness which that shall enjoy when 'tis restored. As the Soul is imperfect and but part of a Being while separated from a Body, so it cannot possibly be compleat in its Happiness while it is incompleat in its Nature. It is necessary then to the full and due Reward of good Men, that their Souls be joined to, and rewarded in and with a Body. It is indeed to a vicious, worldly and sensual Man some Punishment, to have his Soul separate from a Body, because his carnal and sensual Inclinations are thereby deprived of all gratification; but yet 'tis a greater Punishment to such an one to be joined to a Body actually tormented too, as well as deprived of its sensual gratifications. The Body then of a wicked Man may be separated from his Soul, to punish in some degree, for the present, his vicious Carnality and Worldliness with the want of sensual gratifications, and may be joined to it again after a time, to give him farther punishment in the enduring of actual

al Torment, so shall he also be compleatly miserable. So much may suffice to confirm us in the belief of the first Particular. I proceed to a second.

2. We must also understand and believe of this Resurrection, *That the same Body in which we live here and which falls and dies, shall be raised and restored to Life again.* It is not a new Body that shall be made for the Soul to dwell in to all Eternity, but the same Body shall be restored. And this the Holy Scripture evidently teaches us. We have it expressed in the Book of *Job*, as the Expectation of that good and inspired Man; that the same Flesh which Worms would devour after his skin which was already destroyed with his Sores, should be that in which he should, with the same Eyes he then had, see his Redeemer at the last Day, *Job* 19. 26, 27. It shall suffice to confirm this Interpretation and Application of this Scripture to say, that thus the Ancient Writers of the Christian Church understood it. And they when they would prove that the same Body shall rise again, do commonly produce this Scripture for it. Again, When 'tis said, *They who sleep in the dust shall awake*, as in *Dan.* 12. 2. And, *They that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth*, as in our Text: And, *The Sea gave up the dead which were in it*, in a Vision which *St. John* had of this Resurrection, as in *Rev.* 20. 13. These Expressions do plainly intimate, that the same Body which the Dust, or Sea, or any other Element, have received, shall be restored again. The Bodies which rise again are returned from those places to which our dead and dissolv'd Bodies are scattered: Therefore the same Bodies are restored again; for if new ones were made, what need is there that those should be made out of the Sea that were lost in the Sea? And yet farther, the Apostle *Paul* teaches us this concerning our Resurrection, *1 Cor.* 15. 53. where he says, *This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this*

this mortal must put on immortality. If it be not the same Body which rises again, but a new one is made, then this mortal and corruptible Body does never put on Immortality and Incorruption, but remains for ever scattered and dissolved. So firm a belief had some of the Ancients of this matter, that they pronounced their belief in these words; *I believe the Resurrection of this Flesh*, at the same time shewing what Flesh they meant, by making the sign of a Cross on their Foreheads, (*Ruffin. in Symbol.*) And this also our own Reason may help us to believe, especially upon the further Assistance which the Holy Scripture affords us.

(1.) We may justly conclude this also from the Judgment which we are assured shall be. If the same Body does not rise again to receive its deserts, then, since the Soul shall not be without a Body, it will be one Body that sins or does well, and another that is punished or rewarded for it. And as it is not Equity to let that Body which has been denyed, mortified and hardly used in well-doing, and perhaps has suffered Torments and Death for Righteousness sake, to be for ever lost, and to give the Soul a new Body to receive the Rewards of these things; so neither would it be just to punish a new made Body which never concurred in the Actions of this Life, for the sins which another was guilty of. If then we shall be judged and rewarded in a Body for the things done in the Flesh, it is not congruous to imagine this shall be done in any other than the same Flesh.

(2.) We may help our selves to believe even this difficult Point, from the Consideration of the Vast and All-comprehending Knowledge of God. This may assure us, that he must needs be able to find out all the scattered Dust of the same Body wheresoever 'tis dispersed. in order to the raising it again. It is not possible that God should be ignorant of any part
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or Atom of the Bodies that are to be raised. *He understands our thoughts afar off*; therefore much rather the parts of our Bodies. Of Him the *Psalmist* says, *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret; thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect; and in thy Book all my members were written*, Psal. 139. Yea, he ascribes to God the making him wonderfully in the Womb, as is intimated Verse 14. but we must necessarily conclude, That if He forms and makes us up, He must needs know every particle of matter which goes to our composition. Again, of good Men 'tis said *The hairs of your head are all numbered*, Matth. 10. 30. And, *He keepeth all the bones of such, so that not one of them shall perish*, Psal. 34. 20. May not these things fully secure us that He knows every part of our Body while it is united to us. And then we must also believe, that his vast Knowledge does not forget any of those parts when the Body is dissolved and they are scattered. For, as He knows every part of us; So He also knows always every part and atom of matter that is in the whole World. 'Tis said, *He tells the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names*, Psal. 147. 4. *He hath measured the waters in the bellow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure*, in Isa. 40. 12. These Expressions are design'd to intimate his particular and distinct Knowledge of all the parts of the Creation. And if his Knowledge be such, it cannot possibly be hid from Him, what becomes of every part of our dissolved Bodies. Let the parts of them be added to the Waters of the Sea, or the Dust of the Earth, or the Winds of the Air; Let them be added to a Beast, or a Fish, or a Plant, or a Stone; yet still he knows where they are. He to whom the nature of every thing is perfectly known, and what parts it had before, must also know what new parts are at all times added to it: And if any of the parts of an humane
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Body when it is dissolved, are added to any of these things, it cannot be without his Knowledge. And when a number of humane Bodies, too great for us to compute, are thus scattered and dispersed in the Universe, yet He must still know where they are, and understand to which Body each of those parts does belong. These things may reasonably be ascribed to Him whose *Understanding is Infinite*, as is said, *Psal. 147. 5.* though they are very strange and puzzling to our shallow Capacities. And we do not ascribe to him an Infinite Understanding, but a finite and limited one, if we doubt of his Capacity for these things.

(3.) We may help our selves to believe that God is able to gather and make up the same Body again as well as to find it out, and that from the Consideration of his Almighty power. His power is doubtless as Infinite as his Understanding. Every thing in God is infinite; all is alike. There can be nothing which Power can effect, that he cannot do. And we have several such Instances of his Power as from whence we must, if we believe them, conclude, That he is able to raise up the same Body from Death. Such it is if we well consider it, That so curious and wonderful a Frame as the humane Body is composed in the Dark, in a way unknown to her that bears it in its formation. Such an Instance it is also of his Power. That these living Bodies of ours are maintained by the dead and dissolved Bodies of the Creatures we feed upon, or by Food which never had an animal Life. We have Life from Death every day: That which has not Life in it self, yet gives us Life through the Blessing and Power of God. And then cannot He also raise our dead Bodies to Life again even from lifeless Dust? Farther, The living Creatures which breed only out of the Corruption of somewhat else, as I doubt not many of those we call Insects, at least, do, these

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may help us to believe our Resurrection from the Dust. Farther, Such an Instance of the Divine Power as from whence we may expect our Resurrection, was the putting Life (as we may say) into the Waters of the *Egyptian* River, when he made it bring forth Frogs in such abundance, that they covered and overflowed all the Land of *Egypt*, as at other times the Streams of that River were wont to do. Or perhaps it was yet more parallel to the mighty Work we are speaking of, That He should put Life into the dry Dust of the Land of *Egypt*, as he did when he turned it into Lice, for an uneasie, shameful Punishment of the stubborn, unbelieving *Egyptians*. But farther, His Creating of Man at first from the Dust of the Earth, may certainly assure us, that he is able to re-make us from it again. And His making all this visible World out of nothing, all the Earth and Sea, the bright and numerous Stars, and the spacious Heavens: His making the much vaster invisible World out of nothing, and the more excellent and more numerous Inhabitants of that, may reasonably make us, if we believe those things, to expect from his Power, that we shall be raised from the Dead. This Point is as easie to be believed, and as reasonable, as those Instances of his Power which the Holy Scripture tells us of. He is still the same, and will ever be so, without any variableness or shadow of change; therefore he can still do as great things as the greatest of those now mentioned; and this of raising our dead Bodies is a much less Instance of Power than some of them. Our Saviour intimates, that this may be concluded from his Power, when he tells the *Sadduces*, who denied the Resurrection, That they erred, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God, Mat. 22. 29. From the Holy Scriptures we may know, that he will raise our dead Bodies to Life, because he has therein promised and declared, That he will do it.

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And from what they say of his Power, and from what we may observe of it, we may reasonably conclude, that He is able to do it.

These things make it very reasonable to believe the Resurrection of the same Body from Death. But because there is an Objection against this Particular, which yet might puzzle weak Minds, I shall answer that before I go to another.

Obj. Some say, that the Bodies of Men are in a continual motion and change; and that within the compass of a very few years those parts which we had before are all gone, and quite new ones are come in their stead; so that we have not lived in the same Bodies all our Lives. If therefore the same Body that we have lived in here, in the several Ages of Life, and used in doing well or ill, must rise again; then all the parts it has had or used at any time, must be gathered again; and then would every Man in the Resurrection be enlarged to a vast and excessive bigness. To which Objection I may return these Particulars for an Answer.

(1.) If it were so, That there were such a total Change of the Body within the compass of a few years, as this Objection supposes; And if therefore all that did at any time belong to it as a fixed part, and was used in doing well or ill, should be joined to it again; and so it should be increased in the Resurrection to a much vaster bigness than at any time it has now; yet there is no man can shew what Absurdity there is in this, or why it should be accounted incredible.

(2.) But again; Since God has determined and promised to raise the same Body which we lived and acted in here; we are not to doubt but his Power can preserve every human Body so much the same through all its changes (since he knows and disposes of all the parts of the Universe) as that the greater part of it shall remain the same through our whole

Life, and we shall lie down in the same, that so we may receive the same again in the Resurrection, to be punish'd or rewarded.

(3.) But I may further add, That this Objection is built upon a silly and a false Foundation. For 'tis evident in Nature, that the Body of a Man, does not suffer such a Change as the Objection supposes. There are indeed added to it still, as it is growing, some new, fixed and abiding parts, till it is increased to its just stature; but these for the main do always remain with him while he lives, and he does not change, as they say. For if there were such a Change, the parts of our Bodies could never come to the weakness and decay of Old-age, but we should be always in the vigour and bloom of Youth. If a Man's whole Body did change as they suppose, every seventh year; then we should have the same sort of Body at seventy years of Age that we have at twenty one. But do we not plainly see a great deal of difference? and that the Body at seventy appears hardned and confirmed by a duration much beyond what it is at twenty one, or that it is worn out and weakned with time and using? Has ever an old Man the tender Flesh of a Child? And I doubt not to say too, that they who live many years under the same ill habit of Body, making somewhat a hard shift to support themselves all the while, they find by very uneasy and costly experience, that there is not any such total Change of the Body as this objection supposes. I might add, That though this is supposed, yet it can never be proved, and so it should not stagger our Belief of what we have so good proof for. But I proceed to another Particular.

This Resurrection shall be of All the Dead. They shall arise and return to Life again. Not only the Jews, as some modern Jews have imagined; nor only good Men, as some Hereticks of the Church would

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maintain; but All sorts and conditions of Men shall rise again from the Dead. *That the Resurrection shall be both of the just and unjust* the Holy Scripture evidently teaches. St. Paul speaks it very assuredly in *Acts 24. 15.* and he says there, that this was the common belief of the Church of the *Jews* in his time; The Religion which they had derived from their Ancestors taught them this. We have it indeed expressly said in *Dan. 12. v. 2.* Where the Prophet asserts plainly a Resurrection of both sorts, in saying, *some shall rise to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* And this our Text also plainly asserts, in saying, *All that are in the graves shall come forth,* which means All the Dead, for elsewhere 'tis said that, *The sea also shall give up his dead* in the Resurrection, *Rev. 20.* and then it divides them into the two sorts of good and evil Men. And as both these sorts shall rise to be judged for what they have done in the *Flesh*, and to receive according to it, so the same is to be said of the young and the old. Infants that but just came into the World, and then vanish'd again; Or such as did but just live, and then died in the Womb, shall rise again, as well as those that have grown to maturity, and lived many years on Earth. This, some think, the Apostle means when in his Vision of the Resurrection he says, *He saw the dead, small and great, stand before God*, *Rev. 20. 12.* But there is an Objection proposed in one of the Ancients (*Justin Mart. Qu. & Resp. ad Orthod.*) against the Resurrection of Infants; This I shall here examine; Especially because any one that has a mind to cavil against this Point of our Faith may chance to fall upon the same. It is this;

Obj. If the Resurrection (they may say) be for the sake of the things which every one hath done in the *Flesh*, that they may have their due Reward; To what purpose shall Infants rise again, or those who, after they were quickned, died in the Womb; who

cannot receive the Reward of any good or evil Actions, for they have done none, nor be sensible of Reward or Punishment through their immaturity.

Answ. To which he wisely returns; He that believes that to be true, *It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power,* it will be possible, and indeed it becomes him to believe the Resurrection of Infants. Meaning that if there be good reason, as he here supposes there is, to believe the Resurrection of the Persons; then this can be no objection worthy to make any Man doubt of this Article of our Faith. For he that gives them Incorruptibility, can give them also a Power to be sensible of the good things which they are raised to partake of. And he adds; If they rise not again, it would appear that God had made them in vain; but it is certain he does nothing in vain: and more he says to the same purpose. To this we may add, that Infants may be, and are, reckoned among the good or evil doers. All the Posterity of Adam partake in his pollution and Guilt by Nature and so are reckoned evil Doers; therefore are all said to be Children of Wrath by Nature; all lie under the Curse of the first Sin, and are obnoxious to eternal Punishment. And all the Infants that are by the Grace of God elected to partake of Christ, by receiving of Baptism, or by being born of Christian Parents, by whom they are dedicated and designed for Baptism; though they should be accidentally deprived of it: These are certainly reckoned amongst the well Doers. They shall as well as other Christians, receive the Reward of Righteousness and Well-doing, through the Merits and Righteousness of Jesus Christ. The Infants of believing Parents being offered to God by the Prayers of their Parents and of the Church, are not to be excluded from Salvation; Therefore they may be expected to rise again, and to partake of a perfect and compleat Salvation; which without the Resurrection of their Bodies they could

could not have. All the Effect and Punishment of Sin shall be done away from them, as well as the Guilt and Pollution of it, and because these are so; and therefore they shall intirely recover from that Death and Dissolution which is the fruit and consequent of sin. And thus, I suppose, this third Particular is now sufficiently confirmed. I shall proceed no farther at present, but put an End to this part of the Discourse.

The PRAYER.

MOST Great and Incomprehensible God! Thy Greatness is unsearchable, and thy Ways past finding out. Thou art infinitely exalted above all thy Creatures, and no Understanding, but thine own infinite one, can reach thy immense Perfections. So much, Great God, are we poor Creatures below Thee, that we find it hard for us to believe that possible to be done, which thou canst easily do. Thy Thoughts, O Lord, are not as our thoughts, nor thy Ways as our ways: But as the Heavens are high above the Earth, so are thy Thoughts above our thoughts, and thy Ways above our Ways. We fall down before Thee, O Great and Glorious Being; we adore, we reverence, we admire, we praise Thee. We will not take upon us to fix any limits to thy Wisdom and Knowledge, or to thy Power, or to any of thy Glorious Attributes. We will believe thou canst do whatever pleaseth Thee in Heaven and in Earth; and that Thou wilt do whatever Thou hast promised. Thou art worthy to be feared, and had in Reverence by all that draw nigh unto Thee; worthy that we continually stand in awe of Thee; that we make it our constant business to please, and approve our selves to Thee. Thou art worthy that we love Thee above all things, and resign our selves to Thy disposal, and put our whole trust in Thee in the Course of well-doing. Thou art mighty to bless, and mighty to punish; canst make us happy in an Immortal Life, and canst destroy both Soul and Body in Hell for ever. Oh how desirable is thy Favour! Thy Loving-kindness is better than this Life. And how terrible is

thy Displeasure ! How fearful a thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God ! We humble and abase our selves before Thee, as we ought to do, who have lived too careless both of thy Love and of thy Wrath. We acknowledge and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickedness ; we abhor our unreasonable Provocations of Thee. O Lord, have mercy upon us ; according to the multitude of thy tender Compassions, for the sake of Jesus Christ, blot out all our Transgressions. And, we beseech Thee, give us the Grace for ever hereafter to serve and please Thee in newness of Life. Lord quicken us, who by Nature are dead in Trespasses and Sins, to a spiritual and divine Life. Help us firmly to believe, that Thou art, and art a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Thee. That thou wilt not leave their souls in Hell, nor suffer their Bodies to lie for ever under the Ignominy of Corruption : but wilt raise them up to partake of everlasting Rewards. Let us be therefore diligent in well-doing, fruitful in all good works ; that so we may hereafter obtain a blessed Resurrection to eternal Life. Lord teach us the Wisdom to mortifie our Bodies now, for the sake of Piety and Vertue ; that we may have them hereafter improved to their highest perfection. Teach us to deny our selves now for thy sake, that we may hereafter gain the full Satisfaction which Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee. Dispose us to a readiness to lay down this short and temporal Life for Thy sake, that we may find and obtain an immortal one.

We humbly implore thy Mercy for all Mankind. Lord give to all Nations, Unity, Peace and Concord, Especially, Let there be no more Hurting or Destroying in all thy holy Mountain. Let the Light of thy glorious Gospel have a free Course, and be mightily glorified by its Efficacy and Influence upon the Hearts and Lives of Men ; and bring all Jews, Turks, Heathens and Infidels, to the Knowledge of thy Truth ; and all that know thy Truth, to answer and adorn their knowledge by a good Practice. Bless the Nations to which we belong, Deliver us from Errour and false Doctrine. Promote Love and Charity, and settle Peace, and maintain Truth among us. Lord, bless those that Thou hast set over us in Church or State, and give them thy Assistance, to promote thy Honour and true Religion among us ; Give a mighty success, to this purpose, to their good Examples, and to their diligent Endeavours :
And

And make us yet a People whom Thou mayst dwell amongst, and own for Thine, by the favourable Dispensations of thy Providence. Let thy Voice which we have heard this day in the preaching of the Gospel, be effectual among us, to raise every one that is yet dead in Trespasses and Sins to a new and holy Life. Grant us thy gracious Protection this Night, and comfortable, refreshing rest, and let our lying down in our Beds, put us in mind of our Death; and our Hopes to rise the next morning, make us also to consider our Resurrection, that we may take care so to live now, as that we may die with Comfort, and rise again in Joy and Glory. Hear our poor addresses, pardon the Defects of them; and accept us in Jesus Christ, in whose Name and Words we farther pray, laying;

O UR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

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THE
Resurrection of our Bodies
 Represented, Prov'd and Applied.

The Second Part.

Let us Pray.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorifie thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

John 5. 28, 29.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall bear his voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of Damnation.

IT is indeed a very miserable and shameful Weakness which our natural Bodies are now fallen under, for the Punishment of the first Sin. And it is a melancholy thing to think how many Pains, Diseases and Vexations, we are liable to in this Life,
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by reason of their present Frailty and Mortality. And yet the Thoughts of Death are much sadder and more afflicting than these, to expect that this sensible and warm Flesh shall become a cold stiff Clod; these comely proportions must be disordered into shapeless Dust, this Beauty or Strength must alter to that degree, as to leave no trace or sign of either. Whatever we are most fond of, and do admire our selves for; whatever Desires we most please our selves to indulge and gratifie; all these shall be dissolved and utterly destroyed. When we have fed this Body with great Labour and Care; when we have with great Cost gratified its wanton and superfluous Appetites; when we have set it off with the richest Ornaments that the Earth can yield: After all it shall become a Mass of rottenness and putrefaction, and be odious and distastful to those who have most admired it. Within a very little while shall all this misery and disparagement come upon it. This is the sad Fate and Doom to which all Mankind are now sentenced, and no greatness of Wealth or Quality, no high Offices or Honours, no nor even Piety and Virtue can exempt any of us from it.

But to be Pious and Virtuous is a Ground and Foundation for such Hopes as may sufficiently comfort us against all these sad thoughts and expectations. Our Religion gives us Assurances from whence those that are Religious may derive effectual Consolation against them. For it tells us, our Bodies shall recover again from Death, and shall shake off all this Frailty and Mortality; that we shall yet live an immortal Life. And it assures us that our immortal Life shall be a happy one, if we govern this by the Rules and Laws of Religion. This is the import of many places in Holy Scripture; and especially of that which I have now read for our present Text: In which our Saviour says:

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The hour is coming in the which, all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; those that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.

From this Scripture I have begun to Discourse concerning our Resurrection from the Dead; And to make this great Article of our Faith as clear and useful to us as I can, I have designed to employ the Discourse upon it in the distinct Representation, and Proof, and Application of this Truth. That we may rightly understand, and firmly believe, and affectionately and seriously apply to our selves the Doctrine of our Resurrection from Death. I have already mentioned and proved three Particulars concerning it, which are these,

(1.) We must know and understand that it is a Resurrection of our Bodies only which the Holy Scripture every where means when it speaks of the last and general Resurrection of the Dead.

(2.) That the same Body shall rise again which we live and act in here, and in which we do good or evil.

(3.) It has been said, That all the Dead shall arise and return to Life again.

I shall now proceed to state and prove the Particulars that remain. Only I think fit to say, before I mention them, that you may observe, I shall be now declaring with what sort of Bodies the Dead shall arise. I shall not indeed, in giving an account of this matter, concern my self to satisfy every nice Enquiry about it; but shall endeavour to keep close to the Holy Scripture, which is a Fountain of all necessary Knowledge, and content my self to know and say no more of it than that does plainly and evidently teach me.

(4.) It must be added then in the next place, *That the Bodies of all Men shall rise perfect and compleat in all their parts.* What was said of the Miracles which

which our Saviour wrought may be applied to this Resurrection: In it, the *Blind shall see, the Lame shall walk, the Deaf shall hear, the Maimed shall be made whole*. Thus the good Man, who has yielded his *Members instruments of Righteousness unto Holiness*, who has used them in the service of God, and according to the direction and rules of his Law; he shall receive them again to partake in the Reward of well-doings: And the Sinner that has yielded his *Members instruments of Iniquity unto Iniquity*, shall also receive them again to be punished and tormented, and to partake in the desert of his sins, as they have concurred in the commission of them. As in good Men all deformity and defect of Limbs shall be cured, as appendages of mortality, and so the effects of sin, because all sin and guilt shall be done away from them: So in wicked Men, all their Members will be restored, that they may be miserable in all. This compleatness of the Body shall render the happy so much the happier, and the miserable so much the more miserable. The end of the Resurrection then, which is, That all may receive according to what they have done in the *Flesh*, does prove and assure this Particular. For the one sort cannot receive full and perfect happiness but in the Restoration of their whole Bodies, nor can the other be compleatly miserable without this. But I shall farther confirm this matter, by answering another Objection against our Resurrection: Which I did not think fit to consider before, because it is levelled against this as well as against some of the former Particulars. It is this: *Object*. Some will say, There are People in the World that feed upon humane flesh: Some eat the Bodies of their ancient Parents, some those of their Enemies: And besides; If a humane Body be eaten by Fishes, and they are eaten by living Men; or, if a dead Body, being buried and turned to Dust, any parts of it do grow into a Plant, as we may suppose it does, and that

that Plant is eaten by any Beast, which afterwards some other living Men feed upon: In any of these cases (say they) the dissolved Bodies of the dead may become the parts of the living Bodies of some other Men. And then, How is it possible that the same Body should arise which we lived in here; and that all Men should arise with the same Body which they had; and that they should all be compleat in all their parts, when thus there are several parts of humane Bodies that have belonged to several Men? If these parts are united to one Man, another must needs want them.

But that there is no good reason in this Objection, to deny, or so much as doubt of our Resurrection, will very evidently appear by these following Considerations:

(1.) It is certain that all things which possibly may be taken in as food by one of us or by any other Creature, yet were not design'd by the Creator for food or nourishment to us, or to that sort of Creature. To be sure it was never intended that humane flesh should be food and nourishment either to Mankind or to any sort of Creature. And there is no living Creature but may sometimes happen to take in that as food, or with it, which instead of nourishing, shall disease and trouble it, or perhaps be mortal and deadly to it.

(2.) Again, 'tis certain also, That all which we take in for food does not nourish nor turn into a fixed and abiding part of our Body. For if it did so, to how vast and monstrous a Bulk would every one of us grow in the compass of twenty or forty years? And yet farther,

(3.) It has been demonstrated in the former Discourse from the all-comprehending Knowledge of God, That he certainly knows every part of us, and every part of matter in the whole Universe; All that is added to any of us, or to any thing else, He knows

knows then, where all the parts of our dissolved Bodies are disposed: He indeed has the Disposal of them, they are always in his sight and in his Hand (as we may speak.) And since he has positively declared in his Word, That he will raise the Dead, and all the Dead, and all of them whole; we may be sure, that either this uniting of some parts of one Body to another shall not hinder this Resurrection; or else he will, as he easily can, hinder that. He will cause those parts of one Body which are taken in as food, or among the food of another, to pass through this other without ever joining or fixing to it, so that they shall never become the parts of this latter Body. Here can be no difficulty in this to an infinite Understanding, and to the Power that orders all things; nor is it at all difficult or unreasonable to believe that this may be done, if we believe that he has such an Understanding and Power, that is, if we believe there is a God. And thus, I think, this Objection is sufficiently answered, and the fourth Particular well confirmed.

(5.) To represent yet farther the Doctrine of our Resurrection, it must be added, *That our Bodies, when they rise again, will become spiritual and immortal Bodies.* This the Holy Scripture teaches us in several places. In 1 Cor. 15. 44. the Apostle says of the Body, when it falls, *It is sown a natural body;* and when it rises again, *It is raised a spiritual body.* Therefore our Saviour says, That in the Resurrection *we shall be like the Angels in heaven,* Matth. 22. 30. We shall have the same Bodies for substance that we have now, but so changed in their Qualities, as to be somewhat like those lasting and active Spirits. Our Bodies shall be raised spiritual Bodies, not Spirits, somewhat like such Creatures as the Angels, but not turn'd into the same sort. So we may be said to have the same Bodies then as before, but they will be adorned with some spiritual Properties and Abilities.

ties. It is without doubt that *Enoch* and *Elijah*, who were translated from this World to Heaven without Death, have the same Bodies which they dwelt in on Earth, for their Souls were never separated from their Bodies; but then they must needs be mightily changed, to be able to subsist in such a state. *Flesh and blood* in its present weakness and corruptibility cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; but this Flesh changed into a spiritual Body can do it. Therefore also the Apostle speaks of a Change which they shall pass under who shall be alive at the End of the World. 1 Cor. 15. 51. and the Change he tells us will be this in verse 53. That *this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality*. Our Saviour, when he rose again from the Dead, shewed that he had a Body of *flesh and bones*, Luke 24. 39. And so he convinced the Disciples that it was not a spirit which appeared to them, but that He was truly risen from the Dead. They saw too and felt, that he had put on again the same Body in which he liv'd before, for it had the marks of those Wounds which the cruel Nails and Spear had made in his Blessed Hands and Feet and Side when he hung upon his Cross. Yet was our Saviour's Body then become spiritual, inabled to live without any dependance upon meat or drink. It was doubtless so spiritual and immortal as our Bodies are intended in the Resurrection to be: We may justly think that He who is the first fruits of the Resurrection from the Dead, is also the Pattern of it.

This Change of the Body will be common to both sorts of the dead, and both good and bad Men shall have spiritual Bodies: The good to their great and unspeakable advantage, and the bad to their great punishment and misery. Such Bodies shall be able to act without weariness; the Objects they converse with shall be continually sensible to them without
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any intermission: for there will be no decay of spirits there; nor any need of rest or relaxation. And thus the Bodies of good Men will be capable of a continual uninterrupted fruition of the Objects that make them happy, and of a continual performance of those Exercises wherein they shall then delight. They are fit to have a day without night, pleasure without satiety exercise without labour or weariness. And on the other side, the Bodies of evil Men shall be capable of feeling and being exercised with never-ceasing torments. The Holy Scripture does chiefly describe the state of the Bodies of good Men in the Resurrection; but from thence we may also gather and conclude what will be that of wicked Men. And we must needs think that both must have spiritual Bodies for the ends of their rising again, and for the state they are intended for. They must be capable of everlasting happiness or misery, which none but such can be; and they must both be able to subsist without any use of the things of this World to nourish or sustain them. And this we must imagine will be the happiness and advantage of the one sort, and the misery of the other. Good Men shall not be troubled with the mean desires and necessities of the present natural Body, they shall feel hunger and thirst no more; but shall be entertained with more refined, and more pleasing Pleasures than now; they shall exchange brutish pleasures for angelical ones. But wicked Men will be in a sad condition, as to enjoy neither. They shall have no more correspondence with this World, no more enjoyment of their former sensual delights, nor have any other in their stead. Those vicious and sensual desires which they were habituated and enslaved to, remain still in their sordid infected Souls, but without objects to gratifie those desires; or power, if they had objects to enjoy them. And so their melancholy uncomfortable case is somewhat like that of some Sinners

in this Life, whose extravagant Vices have not worn out, but rather increased their vicious desire; but they have disabled them for the gratifying it: They love their sins still, and would fain be following them, but cannot do it, and so are afflicted now both with their desire and their impotence.

Farther; This spiritual Condition of the raised Body will render the Just capable of higher and sweeter Pleasures than now; and they shall enjoy such as would be too ravishing for the present weak and mortal Body to bear. The spiritual Bodies are more active than these natural ones, and so are more perceptible, and capable both of pleasure and of Pain. And so wicked Men shall then feel much more exquisite Torments than now we are capable to bear. And as the Just shall never be weary of their tasteful Pleasures, never be fatiated with their unspeakable Joys, so wicked Men shall never fail under their exquisite and continual Torments.

For as both have spiritual Bodies, they have immortal ones too. The raised Bodies of all Men shall put on this property of Spirits: they shall not be subject to change, they shall never fail, decay or die. This is that the Apostle tells us in the place mentioned before, when he says, *This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality.* Oh happy state of good Men! Their immortal Bodies shall need no more the dull relief of Sleep, they shall feel no more the misery of Pain, they shall never return again to the great disparagement of Death and Dissolution. Thrice happy they who can see no end of their Happiness! who have no fear no expectation of Death, to allay their Joy! who know their transporting Bliss shall never come to an end! And, Oh dismal, Oh unspeakable misery wicked Men! They, in their sad case, shall wish for another Death, but it shall fly from them; they are condemned to Immortality, doom'd to endure
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perpetual sorrows; which will be so much the more sensible and grievous, as they are certainly to be Eternal: They shall not have so much relief or allay to them, as to hope or expect that they will ever come to an end.

(6.) The last Particular to be mentioned is, *That the Bodies of good Men shall be raised in great Splendour and Glory.* The Holy Scripture speaks great things to this Particular. In general, it tells us of such Mens Bodies, that altho' they are *sown in dishonour*, yet they are *raised in Glory*, 1 Cor. 15. 43. A vile, dark and contemptible thing the Body of a good Man is, when it falls into the Dust; but it shall come from thence bright and glorious and honourable. It must indeed now be a Companion to glorious Angels, it must dwell in the splendour and light of Heaven, and therefore must be in some measure suited to it. And we are farther told in *Phil. 3. 21.* that *Christ shall change the vile bodies of good men, that they may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself*, that is by virtue of his Almighty Power. His Body indeed before his Ascension into Heaven was not endowed with any extraordinary lustre; but when he was there and from thence appeared to *Saul* in his Journey to *Damascus*, He struck him blind with the excess of his Glory; and *Saul* himself, giving an account of that Appearance, says, *Acts 26. 13.* that at mid-day he saw a Light from Heaven above the brightness of the Sun, which shone round about him and his Companions. We may learn something more of this matter from other Scriptures. *Moses*, after a little converse with the Inhabitants of Heaven, had his Face arrayed with such a splendour as that the *Israelites* were not able to behold it. And our blessed Saviour, even while he lived in his mortal Body too, yet, when he met with *Moses* and *Elias*, on the top of an high Mountain, He was gloriously transfigured for the

time, and his Face did shine as the Sun, and even his Raiment was white as the Light, as we read, *Matth. 17. 2.* And what the likeness of our Bodies to Christ's glorious Body will amount to, the Scripture does more particularly tell, in saying, *The bodies of good men shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever, Dan. 12. 3.* And our Saviour says, *The just shall shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father, Matth. 13. 43.* The Father of Lights will so shed his Beams of bright and joyful Glory upon them, as to cloath them with Light and Brightness too. And can we imagine how the Just will be pleased with themselves to see this advantageous and honourable Change? They shall none of them now have that mean and contemptible aspect, which here their meek and humble carriage, their severe repentance and mortification gave them. And the Apostle, whose *bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible*, shall now shine with one of the greatest Magnitudes of Glory. How lovely and amiable now shall the blessed Saints be one to another, as well as each one pleased with himself? And how happy are they who will not be ashamed of themselves amidst all the Glory of Heaven? Thus are they able to enjoy that unspeakable Splendour and Glory which dwells on every thing there.

These things may, according to the Holy Scriptures, be said of the Bodies of good Men when they are raised again. And from these, I think, we may conclude, that the contrary to them will be the Condition and Quality of those of wicked Men. Shall they, can we think, be cloathed with Splendour and Glory, who have all the filthiness of Sin upon them? Shall they be thus honoured who are raised to suffer *shame and everlasting contempt*? Shall they be made so happy who are raised to be punished and tormented? There is no necessity that such Splendour and Beauty

ty should attend their spiritual nature. Their Bodies then, we may believe, will be covered with deformity, will bear a frightful, horrid and contemptible appearance, instead of a lovely and honourable one. There will be no marks of the former admired Beauty now, no advantage from rich and well contrived ornaments. They are to suffer now for all that extravagant Cost and excessive Care that was applied to set off and adorn them; and shall be so much the more vile then, by how much they were honoured by Pride and Vanity before. As good Men are suited to their bright Mansions in Heaven, where they are to have their everlasting Habitation; so are Sinners suited to their horrid and dismal Prison, to *the blackness of darkness*, where they must dwell *for ever*, Jude 13. And certainly we cannot now imagine also how dismal, how frightful and odious an appearance each one of them will have to himself, and all to one another! nor with what disdain and horror foolish Sinners will then look upon that monstrous deformity which shall deface those Charms that occasioned their Damnation! When they see their Sin making such a havock of the beauty which they admired themselves or another for, they will account themselves foolish Sinners too. The Just shall, at the Resurrection, be endowed with never-fading Glory and Beauty, and the Wicked be covered with a loathsome and incurable Deformity.

Thus I have represented the Doctrine of our Resurrection from the Dead, I think, as far as the scripture will carry us in it. And farther than that if I should endeavour to go, as I could say nothing that would have any certainty in it, so neither could I say what would be worth any Man's regarding. And, I think, I have confirmed each Particular of the Representation, so as that every part of it may appear fit to be credited by any wise and judicious

dicious Person, yea, by the greatest Pretenders to Wit or Reason.

I shall now briefly apply what has been said, to enforce some few necessary and useful Admonitions,

(1.) These things do utterly condemn and forbid the limiting of our Care and Concern for our Bodies to this present mortal and perishing Life. Alas: all our Cost and Care upon them of this sort will quickly be lost; and come to nothing! Our Death will very shortly put an end to all the fruit of it, and befool it all. We build fine Houses, we buy rich Cloaths, we provide costly Dainties for weak and mouldring Dust; for that which sinks under all our Cost and Care, which is continually going away from all the provision that we have made for it. Do we not *spend our days in mere vanity* then, if this Life engrosses all our Care, when we must in a few *moments go down to the Grave*? Our time of Life on Earth is short, but very important upon this account; That our future state and condition depends upon our behaviour here. All our Provision for Eternity must be made in time. Indeed it must needs be so, for if the time of Work be not limited and fixed, that it might come to an end, when should we reach our Reward? And this, if we are wise, may redound to our great Advantage, because, for a few moments Labour, we may gain an eternal Reward. But if so much may be gained by our well-spending of this mortal Life, surely we should have some Care about it now, while this Life lasts. Since there will be an universal Resurrection of the Dead, and no Man can hope to avoid it, and there may be so happy a Resurrection obtained; Can any Man in reason be careless what shall become of him when he must rise again? Is it reasonable we should spend our time only to provide and enjoy the conveniences and gratifications of a few moments, when we might employ it so as to gain the conveniences and

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happiness of Eternity? Especially should it excite our great Concern and Care in this Matter, that we must have at last either a happy Resurrection or a miserable one; if we miss of the former, we cannot possibly avoid the latter.

(2.) This Doctrine gives us great encouragement to undergo the most difficult and costly Tasks of Religion; To deny our selves for the sake of Christ, we may see by this, is the surest way to promote our greatest Interests: To mortifie and cross our sensual Inclinations, that they may be conformable to the Rules of Religion, and may not, by an impertinent Importunity, hinder us in our Duty, will certainly obtain for our Bodies hereafter the highest Satisfactions and Pleasures. To spend our time and strength in a most laborious and diligent performance of what our stations require towards God and towards Men will certainly bring us to a very joyous and blissful Rest for ever. And to lose our Lives for the sake of Truth and the Service of God, is a sure way to find them; to purchase an immortal Life with the loss of a mortal one. How much then is Religion our Wisdom and our Interest even in the hardest and most disagreeing thing it can put us upon? How wise was the Apostle, when he counted not this Life *dear to him, so that he might finish his course with joy*, and fulfil the Ministry committed to him, as he speaks *Acts 20. 24.* that is, that he might but live so as to gain a happy Resurrection? We can in no other way so well serve the Interest, the Honour, the Happiness of our Bodies, as in governing them strictly by the Rules of Religion.

(3.) This may justly reconcile good Men to Death, and mightily allay at least, if not quite cure the Fears of it. When Sicknes and Pain tell them, this is a poor, crasie, mortal Body, and must unavoidably die and be dissolved; It may be a great Consolation to think, but it shall not always lie

dissolved; it is not lost or thrown away after it has been diligently and perhaps hardly used in the Service of God. Let us but get the Assurance of a joyful and happy Resurrection, and we need not be afraid of Death. We shall then be able to account the separation of Soul and Body, for a while a great advantage to both, and shall see both the Wisdom and the Love of God in it, as the case is with us at present. In that the Body shall thereby be laid to rest in the Grave from injury and labour, 'tis laid up and delivered from this perplexed, confused and miserable World; where if it should stay, it must needs feel a very grievous share in the common Calamities; 'tis delivered from a World that is cursed and made subject to Vanity, as the Scripture speaks, by reason of Sin. And 'tis a mighty advantage to the Soul to be freed from the necessary Cares for the Body, and from partaking in the frequent Grievs and Inconveniences it meets with here. And besides, This Separation for a time will perfect in the Soul the Cure of all Worldliness and Sensuality, and render it the more compleatly fit for the spiritual and heavenly Felicity which it is intended for. To consider these things, and then to think also that both shall within a while meet again, both mightily improved and fitted for Happiness, and then shall live together for ever, without ever having any reason or occasion to wish for or to fear another Separation. These are thoughts might justly make us rather desire than fear or abhor our natural Death.

(4.) Lastly, It is highly fitting that we do earnestly long for and desire the time of this general Resurrection. We ought to prepare for it, and then desire the time when the Lord Jesus *shall come again in his glory; when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth.* This becomes us as Christians, and is required of us, though perhaps but few take notice of it. It is implied to be a Duty that

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we love the appearing of our Lord and Master Jesus, that we think of it with pleasure and desire, 2 Tim. 4. 8. And this is greatly encouraged there, when the Apostle says, He will at his appearing give a Crown of righteousness to all such as love it, that is, to them who did prepare for, and so put themselves into a capacity to desire it. We cannot love the thoughts of this, nor take delight to expect it, without wishing for it. Again, we are exhorted to look for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Tit. 2. 3. which certainly does not mean a cold, unaffected expectation that such a thing will be, neither does the Apostle advise that we expect it with terror and dread, such as to wish it might not be: but his Exhortation certainly intends to put Men upon expectation with desire, with frequent thoughts of it, and earnest longings after it.

Let us then earnestly desire the time of this general Resurrection, the proclaiming of the Summons, for all Men to arise from Death.

Would that blessed time come and surprize us alive, it would save us the trouble and pain, the pangs and convulsions of Dying. We should pass under a sudden, easie change to be fitted for an immortal state: For all Men that are then alive, at the sounding of the last trumpet, shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: and that would excuse us from the violence of a Separation of Soul and Body.

Let us long for this blessed time, because then *this mortality shall be swallowed up of Life*. This natural Body shall become a spiritual one; it shall then be all Life, and know no more so much as the Image of Death: Then our dark and vile Bodies shall be cloathed with Light and Glory: Then these Eyes shall see the beauty and splendour of the Heavens, and shall see our selves Partakers of it: These Ears shall hear the harmonious Songs of happy Saints and Angels. Then we shall be taken up from this Earth,

Earth, to be for ever with the Lord, where we shall have an Employment without labour or weariness, Pleasures without intermission or satiety, Light without darkness, Duration without age or decay, Joy without fear or care, and Blessedness and Life without end and death.

Let us long for and desire this blessed time, for the sake of those excellent Saints that are already departed; and who are waiting and praying in their separate state for the final Redemption of their Bodies. And thus may we exercise our Charity also towards our own particular Friends and Relations deceased and gone from us; and we may desire for our selves the satisfaction of meeting them again: Then the tender Mother shall meet again the dear Infant, the hopeful Youth she has parted with to the Grave: Then the parted Husband and Wife shall meet again, never to be separated any more: Then dear Friends shall enjoy each other for ever: Then we shall see those great and good Men whom we have heard or read of, and whose excellent Examples quickned and incouraged us in the ways of Vertue, and shall be glad to converse with them for ever: Then will all the Company of good and happy Souls rejoyce and triumph to see their Faith proved true, their Hopes and Expectations fulfilled, their Desires satisfied, their Labours, Conflicts, Fears and Dangers at an end, and their endless and compleat Felicity attained.

Let us earnestly desire this time, because it is the time of our kind Saviour's publick Honour and Glory, the time of shewing his Greatness to the careless, unbelieving World; 'tis the time of rewarding to him fully and before Men the meanness and contempt of his humbled state on Earth, which he submitted to for our sakes: 'Tis the time when the crucified *Jesus* shall sit on the Throne of his Glory attended by an innumerable company of Angels, and
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before him shall be gathered all Nations: When those that despised him shall be ashamed to appear before him; those that would not that he should reign over them, shall be judg'd and punish'd: When the Devil shall be confined to his eternal Prison, and Death the last Enemy shall be destroyed, and so all his Enemies shall be made his foot-stool: And when he shall come to own, reward and dignifie all his meek and humble, his oppressed and despised Followers; *to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe.* These things we may very justly long for, and say, *Even so come, Lord Jesus, Come quickly.*

The P R A Y E R.

O Almighty, Everliving God! who givest Being to every thing, that is, Life to all that lives, and Motion to all that moves. Thy powerful Word brought this vast World out of nothing, put confused matter into order, brought light out of darkness, and commands what Thou wilt to be both in Heaven and in Earth, and disposes of us as Thou pleasest; We poor, weak Creatures can never stand against it. When thou wilt, thou turnest man to destruction, and when thou sayest, Come again ye Children of men, we then revive and live again. We have great reason, O Lord, to admire and praise Thee for thy Goodness towards us, that when thou canst do what thou wilt, yet thou dost not use us with the utmost rigour and severity that we have deserved. Thou art slow to anger, and of great Mercy, and even in thy wrath thinkest upon Mercy: Though we are justly doomed to die and be turned into Dust for our Sins, yet hast Thou provided us a Saviour, by whom, if we repent of our Sins, and give up our selves to obey and follow Him, we shall obtain a happy and glorious Resurrection. O What reason have we to praise Thee, for that we are not under the uncomfortable Condemnation of being eternally dissolved, and cast away for ever from thy Sight and Favour, and Presence! nor under the worse and more afflicting Condemnation of being only and irrecoverably miserable; for that there is such a Resurrection to be attained

attained as that to eternal Life. We have reason to admire and praise Thee, that we may have the Consolation of such Hopes and Expectations against the Pains and Diseases, the Misery and Dissolution of this present Life. We acknowledge it is an exceeding great Favour, O Lord, that thou hast so clearly revealed the future state, and so evidently told us, that we must all rise again at the end of the World, to a joyful and happy Resurrection, or to a miserable and sad one; that so we might have sufficient and fair warning to take Care for our everlasting Happiness. Thou hast, of thy great Goodness, set Life and Death before us, and given us leave to chuse between them. O Lord, of thy infinite Mercy, carry thy Favour further towards us, and make us very sensible of these things: Affect us with the Assurance of two so different Resurrections: Make our careless and foolish Hearts seriously concerned to provide and secure a happy Immortality. O make us wise to the Salvation of our Souls; make us wise for Eternity, laborious and industrious for an happy Eternity. Let us, by the guidance and assistance of thy Grace, lay up a Treasure in Heaven for the next Life, by godly and charitable living now. Oh give us, we pray Thee, an Interest in the great Redeemer; let us be Partakers of the Purchases of his Death for Mankind. For his sake pardon all our Sins, sanctifie us throughly in Body, Soul and Spirit; take away all Guilt and Stain of Sin, that we may be delivered at length from all Punishment for it; that we may recover from our natural Death, and never fall under the eternal one; that we may have a happy and joyful Resurrection, and come to live and reign for ever with him.

We humbly implore thy Mercy, in his Name, for all Mankind: grant that they may know the Benefits purchased by his Death, and assured by his Resurrection; and knowing, may seek and obtain them. Restore Peace where it is banished; establish and prosper thy Church wheresoever it is planted; root out of it all things that offend, and make it fruitful in all good Works to thy Glory. Bless the Nations in which we live with a long Establishment of Peace and Truth: Let our Queen and Governors in Church and State be directed to Rule with Justice and great Wisdom, and make them a terrour to all Evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. Teach the Subjects all due meekness and obedience. Be gracious in a particular manner to all
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that are more nearly related to us; grant that with them we may live together in thy Fear here, and in Glory hereafter. Bless the means of Grace, those in particular which we have this day enjoyed, that they may effectually advance us in all due fitness for a comfortable Death and a happy Resurrection. We commit our selves this night and evermore to thy Keeping. Hear us, O Lord, in all these our Requests which we trust thy good Spirit moves us to ask; and hear us farther in those which have been taught us by thy Son and our blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ*, saying,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the Glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

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THE Last Judgment.

Prov'd and Represented.

Let us Pray.

PRECEASE us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2 Cor. 5. 10.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

THE want of due Consideration is the great Cause why the Doctrines of Christian Religion are so little regarded, and so uneffectual as they too commonly are. From hence it is; that either we doubt of, or deny the Truth of them, whatever Evidence they have attending to convince us of it: Or else we do not rightly understand the Weight and Importance of them. And by Consequence, that thing must needs have but little Power upon

upon us, which either we do hardly believe, or account so inconsiderable as not to be worthy to influence us.

Thus it fares with the certain and important Truth which is the Subject of this Text. If it were but firmly believed and well understood, it must needs be able to deter the most hardened Sinner from his Sins : It would baffle the most alluring Temptations, and stifle the strongest Motions of Inclinations to Wickedness. But to this purpose, Men should consider it well, that they might see the Truth and the Importance of it, that they might apprehend what Reason there is, that such a thing should influence them; and thus they neglect to do, they put this matter as much as they can out of their Thoughts, and are unwilling to think of it.

In these words we have a very plain and good Assurance that there will be a Day of Judgment for all the World : And several very considerable Particulars concerning that Judgment are here mentioned ; As, that Jesus Christ will be the Judge who shall transact that great Affair ; That all Mankind will be the persons judged ; for 'tis said, *we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.* And that the whole Course of our Lives shall be examined, and censured, and a Sentence accordingly shall be pronounced upon us ; for 'tis said here, *that every one shall receive according to what he has done in his Body, whether it be good or bad.*

It shall be the Business of this present Discourse, to prove and illustrate or represent this great Transaction ; To make it appear, that it is well worthy to have more Influence upon our Lives than it commonly has.

In the first place, I shall propose a sufficient Proof of this : That there will be an universal Judgment of Mankind upon their Behaviour in this Life. Many Arguments are commonly produced to evince this ;

this; but I shall separate only two of the most considerable ones for our present Consideration; and if these do not convince us of it, 'tis very likely more would not. They are these,

(1.) God himself has plainly and frequently declared, that there shall be such a Judgment of Men. And this is enough to satisfy any Man of it, who will believe upon fair and just Grounds. The Light of Nature and common Reason of Mankind taught Men to expect that there would be Retributions dispensed after this Life, for what Men had done in it: So that it appears to be a thing altogether agreeable and easie to Reason to expect it: And then there can be no reason to doubt of this, when the Sovereign of the World has declared his Purpose and Resolution that it shall be. And this he has done several times in Holy Scripture very expressly.

In the Old Testament we may take Notice of two Declarations of this, by Solomon; In *Eccles*, 11. 9. he speaks thus of this Matter; *Rejoyce, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* His Design is to restrain young Persons from that Excess in the enjoyment of Sensual Pleasures, which they are mightily apt to run into; therefore he bids them amidst those Pleasures, to consider, and know it for a certain Truth, that they must give a very strict account of their Actions to God, and must expect to receive from Him according as their Account shall be. And the same wise Preacher inculcates this important Doctrine again, in *Eccles*. 12. 13. Esteeming it of great use to urge and incite us to the Performance of Duty, as well as to restrain from Vice: He says, *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.* He had said in the verse before, *Let us fear God and keep his Commandments;*
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And to enforce this he adds, That there will come a day by God's appointment, wherein he will pass a strict and righteous censure upon every thing we do, though it be concealed from all but himself.

To these places of the Old Testament, I may add some of the New, which does more frequently give us the express Declarations of the Will of God in this matter. Our Blessed Saviour in *Matth.* 25. does not only tell us, that there will be a Judgment of all Mankind at last, but he also gives a very large and particular Description of it from the 31st. Verse to the end of that Chapter. In *Acts* 17. 31. St. Paul expressly tells the Philosophers at *Athens*, that God has appointed a Day, in which He will judge the world in Righteousness. I shall not need, I think, to mention any more, especially since our present Text is an express Declaration to this purpose. Thus we see this is often said by the Messengers of God from him, which shews it to be his settled and abiding purpose. And this is a Point of Doctrine taught both by the Jewish and Christian Religion; so that this among other things has received Confirmation from all those wonderful Testimonies which God has given to the Truth of both these Religions.

(2.) We may conclude there is an universal Judgment to come from the present Exercises of Judgment in this World, which the Providence of God often presents us with. Some of these are so evidently such, that we cannot chuse but ascribe them to a Providence; and many more we might take notice of if we did well observe the Methods of Providence. God does much oftner punish Sinners in this Life, and bless good Men, than the careless World do commonly imagine. *How oft is the Candle of the Wicked put out, and how often cometh their Destruction upon them? God distributes sorrows in his anger among them, as Job speaks, Job 12. 17.* May we not often see Mens Sins over-
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taking them with an hasty Vengeance? Many perishing in their Wickedness, and many undone by it? May we not often see (as that good Man speaks) *That God lays up their iniquity for their children*, Verse 19. *That he rewards them and they know it?* That after a course of great and long Prosperity, their old Age is often grievously afflicted with the Follies, Rebellious or miseries of their Children, or some other very sensible Calamities. With how sure a Vengeance does God commonly follow some Sins, though perhaps it comes but slowly? He seldom fails to punish Murther with the violent Death of the Murderer by one way or other; nor to punish Filthiness and Uncleaness with the Poverty and Disgrace either of the guilty Person himself or of his Family. And on the other side, we may often see the good Man greatly blest in all that belongs to him, that the *Meek do inherit the Earth, and delight themselves in the Abundance of Peace*; they have a good and competent Portion of this World, and it is kept in safety by God's continual Care over them. We often see that the wicked Man Plots against the Just and is defeated; *the arms of the wicked are broken, and God upholds the Righteous*; And David says, *I have been young and now am old, yet saw I never the Righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread*. These things he speaks in *Psal. 37*. The World has seen the just Providence of God sometimes bringing terrible Judgments upon wicked Men, and delivering the Just who lived among them like *Noah* and *Lot*, from the common Calamity. Thus is God known by the Judgments which he executes; He shews by these things, that He takes Notice of the Actions of Men, and is pleased or displeased when we do well or ill; that he really takes upon him the part of a Judge and Governor of the World; that all Mankind are under his Law and Government, and that he will vindicate his Authority and his Laws, against those that despise them.

them. And from these things, we may well conclude that He will have a time to dispense Rewards or Punishments to those who are not now dealt with according to their Deserts. He did never intend that in this Life Men should receive the full Reward either of their *Good* or *Evil*. This Life is the time of work; in our present State we are to labour in well-doing; but the other is and was Originally intended to be the Season of Rewarding what we have done in this. And the Apostle intimates it to be the Reason why God had with so much Patience spared the Heathen World in their neglect of Him and worship of false Gods, *because he has appointed a Day, wherein he will judge the world in Righteousness*: So that when we see God punishing some Sinners now, but not all; and when we see him sometimes punishing lesser Sinners while he lets the more guilty escape; or singling out some amongst their equal Companions in guilt, to be Instances of his Vengeance, while he spares others, we may reasonably conclude, that He will have a time to punish all: And since we see some good Men prosperous now, and some exercised with various Afflictions: this is a good reason for us to believe he will have a time to bless and reward all them, and by Consequence, that there will be such a Judgment of all Men at last, as the Scripture speaks of.

Thus much I think, may suffice for the proof of this great Affair. I now proceed, as was proposed, to shew that it is indeed a very great and considerable matter, worthy of our most serious Consideration and the regard of our whole Lives, which I intend to do, by setting it out in the Particulars, which are express or intimated concerning it in our present Text, and further than that we need not go for this purpose. They are these following.

(1.) *The Lord Jesus Christ will be the Judge in that Day*; 'tis said we must appear before the Judgment

Seat of Christ; And this is very considerable. For the Scripture tells us, He shall come in the Glory of his Father and all the Holy Angels with Him; a wonderfully Glorious, and Amazing Appearance this must be; when all the Glory of Heaven (as we may say) shall break forth at once. An Innumerable Company of bright Angels shall attend him; those excellent Creatures who are the greatest Beauty of the Creation and who have each of them so much Glory as that a mortal Eye could not bear the View of one of them. And how much greater than all this, may we suppose will be the Glory of the Judge himself whose Deity shall irradiate his Humanity, and cloath it as it were with unspeakable Splendour. In that Day what a Condition shall we be in if we have not some likeness to the glorious Company? How ashamed and confounded shall we be before them, if we are not bright and shining too? The Just indeed shall be raised in Glory, but the Wicked we may conclude will have a very deformed, dismal and unlike Appearance.

He (let us consider) will be Judge who is Just and Righteous, who *loves righteousness and hates iniquity*, and *will judge the world in righteousness*. Then we may be sure he will value nothing but Piety and Vertue, nothing else shall have any Honour or reward in that Day: He is no respecter of Persons, regards not the little greatness of this World: Wealth cannot bribe him, Honour and high Birth cannot sway him to favour. The pure and clean, the just and the merciful shall be regarded more than such; *the righteous are with Him, the excellent of the earth*; only such shall be favoured. To despise the great things of the World is more honourable in his account than to pursue and gain them; and the heavenly Mind will be most approved in that Day. What wealth and honours we had will not avail us, nor what we used in the service of our own lusts or humours;

mours; but rather, what was employed and spent in the Service of God, to promote his Worship and Honour, and to comfort his Servants.

He (let us consider) will be Judge, who is God as well as Man; and as God knows us altogether; all things are naked and open before him, so that we cannot in the least conceal our selves from him. And then, as he is able to know us, so he is (as God) able abundantly to reward or punish; He can dispose of us as he pleases, and make his Sentence take effect whatever it is: And certainly very terrible he must needs be in his Wrath, and very wonderful in his Favour; He will punish, we may expect, and reward too, like a God. Oh how great and considerable then must the issue of his Judgment be!

He will come to be our Judge (let us consider) who was offered to us for a Saviour. And this must needs be well for them who have received him as such; who have accepted his Salvation upon the terms proposed; who have repented of their Sins, and set themselves to obey and follow Him. But what a confusion must they be in who have slighted the Invitations of his Gospel, who would not part with their Sins, nor value Heaven, or receive the Salvation which he offered upon reasonable terms? These will be reckoned to have despised the Purchases of his precious Blood and the Offers of his most obliging Love, to have renewed his dying Grievs to have crucified him afresh, and put him again to shame. And what Favour can such now expect from him, who have thus despised his Favour? He does not come now to offer those despised Benefits any more, but to judge Men according to their deserts. And certainly the greater Kindness and Favour we have despised and abused, the greater Wrath and Indignation we must expect to meet with in that Day.

(2.) We are farther told in our Text, That *All Mankind are the Persons that shall be judged.* And this also is very well worth our considering. When every Person may say, I am one of those who shall stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ: The Judge will not excuse or forget me. Whether I can give a good account of my Actions or not, yet I shall be judged for them: And I shall be judged before all the World. All the Angels that shall attend the Judge, and all the Men that will appear to be judged shall be Witnesses of my Doom, and shall know the Justice of it. Before all these shall I be applauded, honoured and rewarded. If I am found to have done well; and before all shall I be despised, shamed and condemned, if I have done ill.

We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. But then there will be a Separation made between the Righteous and the Wicked. The Righteous shall be placed in circumstances of Honour, at the right hand of the Judge, the Wicked shall be left in disgrace at his left hand, as he tells us, *Mat. 25. 32, 33.* And how sensible will it be, and grievous, for the proud to see those honoured whom they despised, and themselves under contempt and disgrace! How will the great Men of the Earth be confounded to see some of the meanest, and perhaps their Vassals and Servants, placed among the glorious Angels, and set on Thrones above, while they stand below, among the hated and abject Crew of Devils! What an ungrateful Sight it will be, for those Tyrants, that have cruelly oppressed and wronged their Subjects, to see them now advanced and honoured above them? and for those rebellious Subjects, who deposed and murdered their Prince, to see him now restored to Life again, and dignified with a Crown of everlasting Glory? The Company we shall meet will revive the Remembrance of our good or evil Deeds, and so it will signifie much towards the Joys or Terrours of that Day.

(3.) Another thing observable in the Text is, *The Business or End of the last Judgment.* This is intimated in those words, *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Every one shall be judged to receive according as the main tenor and course of his Life on Earth hath been, and does deserve. Now this Expression, I think, may be reckoned to contain and intimate these following Particulars:

(1.) That there will be an *Examination* or the Taking an account of all the Affairs and Concerns of Men. This is evidently taught us in our Saviour's Parable, *Mat. 25. 14. &c.* by which he designed to represent the future Judgment. Of a Man travelling into a far Country, and committing to his Servants the mean while his Goods, to be used and improved by them to some advantage for him. So God gives us all we have, and he gives all to be employed in his Service and to his Glory: And he will call us to an account hereafter for all that we have received. Men are greatly mistaken when they think themselves and what they have to be their own, and that they may do with all what they please. No, these things are all his goods, or talents; They are intrusted with them by the great Lord and the universal Proprietor of the World, and they must give an account to Him how they have used them. It will then be enquired into, and remembred in that Day, what temporal or spiritual Goods we have received from God: What the nature and tendency of all the divine Dispensations towards us has been through the whole course of our Lives: What Encouragements and Obligations, what Helps and Assurances, what Power and Opportunity we have enjoyed of glorifying God and doing good. The great Judge will take notice, what Means of knowing our Duty, and what Knowledge of it we had, and how we used both. It will be remembred, what time,

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what health and strength, what wisdom or learning what wealth and riches, what place and authority among Men we had in the World. Whatever we had which might any ways have been used and applied to the honour of God, and the good of Mankind, shall be taken notice of in that Day; and certainly to whom much was given, of him much shall be required.

And when thus an Account is taken of what we have received from God, it will also be observed and remembred, what we have done. All our behaviour in every part and aspect of it, in every age, and station, and condition of Life, shall be remembred and taken notice of. Though we, foolish and heedless Creatures, take little notice of our selves, and soon forget what we do; yet there is a sure and faithful Record of all kept in the Court of Heaven, in the divine Omniscience.

We shall certainly be judged for our Thoughts. It will be examined, What the general nature and tendency of them has been. Whether they have run continually upon the Stream of Self-love, or of Love to God. Whether they have commonly proposed his Will, or our own; his Glory, or the gratifying our own Lusts and Humours and worldly Interest, as the end of our Actions. The secret Springs of all our Actions will be look'd into. Therefore 'tis said, *God shall make manifest the counsels of the hearts of men*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. And Solomon says, *Eccles. 12. 13.* He will bring every secret thing into Judgment, whether good or evil; which a Learned Father (present Bishop of Ely) understands thus; "No
" evil thing, though only designed, and never actu-
" ally committed, shall go unpunished; and no good
" thing, though only heartily intended, for want
" of Power to accomplish it, shall be unrewarded.

And as our Thoughts, so also our Words shall be taken notice of and remembred in that Day; For by these

these also we shall then be justified or condemned, as our Saviour teaches us, *Mat. 12. 37.* Then shall sinners be convinced of *all their hard speeches which they have spoken against him*, as the Apostle *Jude* says, Then the Blasphemies against God, the Cavils at his Truths, the Scoffs at his Religion, the bold Oaths and Curses, the Perjuries and Lyes, the Slanders and Reproaches which Men have been guilty of shall be remembred.

And as our Words, so all our Actions shall in that Day be taken notice of. And *ungodly men shall be convinced of all their ungodly deeds which they have impiously committed*, as is further said in the Epistle of St. *Jude*. So our Text likewise tells us, we must receive according to *what we have done in the flesh*. The good Actions then of good Men shall be taken notice of to their Honour; Those done in secret shall be openly applauded. And all the evil Actions of wicked Men shall be taken notice of to their Disgrace, and their secret Sins be made manifest to the World, and be condemned before them. That which they would not hear of before from the most gentle and kind reproofs of Friends in private, they shall now be upbraided with, and condemned for by the righteous Judge, before all the World. But how will this amaze and confound them?

In this Examination of our Actions it seems to be intimated in Holy Scripture, That the Sins which are sincerely repented of and forsaken shall be pass'd over in silence, and shall not be mentioned. Thus in *Matth. 25.* in our Saviour's account of the Last Judgment there is no mention at all made of any Failings or Sins of those who are set at the right Hand of the Judge. And in *Ezek. 18. v. 21, 22.* 'tis said, *If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.* And this perhaps may be intimated when the forgiveness of Sin is called a *covering* of it, as in *Psal. 32. 1.* and a *blotting* of it out, as *Acts 3. 19.* Nothing can

can prevent the remembering them against us to our utter confusion, but to repent and forsake them; and this we may believe will prevent it.

(2.) The Examination of our Behaviour will be attended with a just and right *Censure* of what we have done. Our good shall in that day be certainly called and judged to be good; and our evil shall as certainly be censured as evil: that is, the Day of righteous Judgment, of just discriminating and differencing of things. In this World oftentimes is Evil exalted and commended as Good, and Good reviled under the name of Evil; but all the perverse and partial Judgments of Mankind in this matter shall then be discovered and shamed. The good Actions which were darkned and obscured by the Slanders, Misrepresentations, and Misunderstanding, of envious, malicious, or ignorant Men, shall then shine forth in their true lustre; The Righteous and Wise Judge shall own and approve their Goodness before all the World. And on the other side, Those evil Actions which craft and hypocrisie and worldly design had speciously painted and disguised with fair pretences and good names, shall then be unmasked, and be shewn in all their deformity and vileness. Some Men, out of Pride and Self-conceit, because they will not believe they can be mistaken, or out of a mere wilfulness and obstinacy of temper will not fairly and impartially consider their ways, or their worldly interest, as they have placed it, byasses their Judgments: And thus they come to cry up their Evil as Good, they harden themselves in it, and are zealous to promote it. And thus is there a way that seemeth right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death, Prov. 16. 25. When all things come under this righteous Censure at last; Then shall many who thought themselves mightily in favour with God, be reckoned among Evil-doers, as is foretold, *Matth.* 7. 23. And certainly

certainly this just Censure of all our Actions is a thing worth our considering; since this will unavoidably be, we should very carefully examine them our selves; and we should rather be severe than favourable in our Censure of them, because we are apt to judge partially of our selves. Let us consider what a Confusion it would put us into to meet with an unexpected Condemnation; to be rejected, and despised, and condemned as Evil-doers, for those things which we thought were done well, and expected for them to have been praised and rewarded.

(3.) In the last place, It will be the business of that great Day, to pass a Sentence and Doom upon all Persons according as upon Examination and Censure they shall be found to have deserved. And this too is a very considerable part of the Transaction; as will appear if we deliberately meditate but a little upon the two vastly differing and important Sentences which shall be then pronounced upon the good Men and the bad.

To those that shall be found and judged to have done well it shall be said, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World*, as our Saviour tells us, *Matth. 25. 34.* Every word of this Sentence carries Comfort and Joy in it, every word expresses transporting Love and Kindness. The Judge invites them to be with him, to dwell in the same Glory and Bliss where he does. He calls them, *Ye blessed of my Father*, Ye peculiar Favorites of Heaven; Ye were despised of the World, but now, before all Men, ye shall be honoured; and it shall be seen that Heaven values none but you. *Inherit the Kingdom*: It's not Receive to use and to give an account of it hereafter; but, possess as your own, as an Inheritance and Patrimony: And an *Inheritance* it is that shall never fade away, that is *incorruptible*, because *undefiled*, as the Apostle speaks,
1 Pet.

1 Pet. 1. 4. What could be spoken more significant and great than a Kingdom? It shews that great Honour and Rewards shall then be bestowed on good Men: They shall be called from Labour to Rest, from War and Conflict to Triumph over all their Enemies, from a Cross to a Crown. They were called to his Kingdom and Glory, and obeyed the Call; They were bid to seek first and chiefly the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof, and they did so, and are now brought into the possession of it. They have perhaps suffered with Christ, and shall now reign with Him. The Judge shall set them first in Judgment with himself on the wicked World; to judge their unjust Judges, to condemn with him, their unrighteous Enemies; to see and applaud the Contempt of those that despised them, and the Punishment and Destruction of those that tormented and wronged them. And then they shall *inter into their Master's joy*. They shall enter and take possession of that blisful State which from the foundation of the World was designed to reward those of Mankind which should live well on Earth, to which if we had not sinned, we should all have been removed by an easie translation after a time: which though all Men have forfeited by Sin those shall recover, through the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, who have forsaken their Sins, and returned to Holiness and Vertue.

Let us now consider also briefly the Sentence which will be pass'd upon bad Men, as our Saviour represents it, *Matth. 25. 41.* To them, after Examination and Censure of their Lives, it will be said, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And what Heaps of woe and sorrow does this dismal Sentence contain! Every word in it will appear a Load of woe, if it be duly weigh'd and considered. *Depart from me*, is Depart from Heaven and all its Joys, from the Happiness

Happiness which your Nature was originally intended to possess; to depart from unspeakable and endless Joy and Felicity. And the Justice of this will be evident, in that it will appear, that they in the time of their Life had said to the Judge himself, Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways; they shewed themselves to have no Desire or Love to his Presence and Communion; they wilfully shunn'd it, and therefore declined and cared not for his House and Ordinances where he especially manifests himself. To them therefore he now says, *Depart from me, Ye cursed,* You that are now utterly cast out of Favour; Ye are vile and abject, and must never expect to have any Offers of Favour or Mercy any more. *Into everlasting fire;* Depart not to your former Habitations and pleasant Circumstances in which ye lived on Earth; not to fine Houses, plenteous Tables, full Bowls of rich Wines, great Offices and Dignities: but to eternal Ignominy and Contempt, to fast in Fires, to lie down chained in Darkness, and Flames, to a gloomy Prison and exquisite Tortures, from whence you shall never be released. Go to the Punishments prepared for the apostate Spirits: Dwell with them in Misery whom ye have chosen to imitate and follow in Sin and Rebellion against your Creator and Lord. Dwell with those that hate you, that have sought your ruin and will triumph over you in it. And be as miserable among them as mutual Hatred and Contentions, as the Scorns and Insultings of Enemies, and the Upbraidings and Revilings of each other in a most unsociable Society can make ye. And dwell in all this Misery and Vexation for ever. Thus is the Woe and Horror of this Sentence fortified on every part, and it cuts off the Sinner from having one comfortable thought or expectation concerning his everlasting Condition.

These Sentences being pass'd, *The wicked shall go away*

away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into Life eternal, as our Saviour tells us, *Matth. 25. 46.* And then we may reasonably suppose, it is not possible for us now to conceive or express the mighty Joy which shall fill the Hearts of the Just; which shall appear in their Countenances, and break forth in rapturous Songs of Love, and Praise to the great and kind Author of their Salvation. Nor, on the other hand can we now be sensible of that deadly sorrow and Anguish, that dismal Despair which shall then possess and torment the Souls of Sinners, and appear in their most frightful and gasty looks, and break forth in howling Complaints and Cursings of themselves and one another.

But these things we shall do well to fix our Minds upon sometimes in private and deliberate Meditation; that we might so be brought to regard them through the whole course of our Lives, *which is the Use that we ought to make of them.* And every Man, to make himself duly sensible of these things, should suppose himself in these Circumstances; and say, What if it should be my Lot to be thus condemned, or to be thus honoured and rewarded? To which of these two Fates does my rate and course of living tend to bring me?

If a Man finds upon a serious Examination of himself, that he is in the Ways of Piety, and Virtue, and Duty; he may then encourage and confirm himself in those Ways with such Thoughts as these: Suppose my pure Soul were now entering my raised and refined Body which will shine with a pleasing Lustre and Glory, which shall dissolve no more; but shall be for ever the honourable, glorious and convenient Habitation of my Soul! What if I were now lifted up into the Air, to meet my Judge, in the Company of loving and glorious Angels, to meet my Judge, did I say, 'tis to meet my Saviour and Friend: He who has wish'd for this time to shew the

the utmost Kindness which his great Love intends me ; to meet my Lord and Master, whom I have obeyed and served, whose Honour and Interest I have pleaded for in the World, and, to the best of my power, have promoted and defended : I go to meet him whom I have chiefly loved, and have longed to see him in this Royalty and Glory : I am going to be judged ; that is, to be caress'd by the greatest Lover, to receive the Expressions of his Favour, and the bounteous Rewards of a God : to receive publick Honour, and Approbation, and Applause. Suppose I were now sitting enthroned by him, while some of the great, the mighty and the honourable of the World stand below ; that I now saw the Enemies and Persecutors of my Lord, and his Officers and Vicegerents and of his Religion in the World, brought forth, and censured, and condemned to eternal Shame, and Confusion, and Misery : Suppose now the great Transaction over ; all the Company dispersed ; and I were seeing bad Men and Devils drove away from the Tribunal, to their everlasting Prison : And I were now marching in a long Train of Angels and Saints, bright, glorious happy and rejoicing Creatures, amidst *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands* of them after the Glorious Jesus, the King of Saints, into the Mansions of Glory which he has provided for them ! And with them singing with transport and rapture their Hymns of Praise, and saying, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,* Vers. 12. *And blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever,* Rev. 7. 12. He that can suppose himself in these joyful Circumstances, and can upon good Grounds expect them, must needs be encouraged in his good Course of living, whatever the present Difficulties and Inconveniencies of it are.

And

And if on the other side one that is habituated and enslaved to any Course of wickedness would but deliberately suppose himself in the dismal Circumstances of Sinners at that Day, which are the Circumstances that do belong to him, and which he must unavoidably fall into unless he will leave his Sins; this sure must be able to scare him out of them: Let the Sinner then deliberately suppose himself in these Circumstances, that so he may make himself careful not to fall into them. Let him say to himself, What if now I were raised from the Sleep of Death by the loud Summons of the Arch-angel! What if now this Sound were in my Ears, Arise ye Dead, and come before the Judgment-seat of Christ. Suppose I did now see the Heavens fly away before the awful presence of my Judge, and *every mountain and Island removed out of their places*. Suppose I were among the multitude of Sinners, with *kings of the earth and great men, and rich men, and chief captains, and mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man*, all huddled together, all levelled and equalled now: that I were among them endeavouring to hide our selves in Mountains, and Dens, and Caves of the Earth; *saying to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills, cover us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand*; Rev. 6. 14. &c. Suppose I were forced among the Herds of frightened, trembling and amazed Sinners, my self in as much fear and amazement as any, before the Tribunal of the Judge: That I were now standing there to hear my pass'd and forgotten Follies and Sins called to remembrance; to see my secret Wickedness brought to light; to have my disguised Actions rightly censured and judged, to be upbraided with my Faults; to have all the Aggravations of them exposed, and this before all the World. Oh what confusion and shame would cover me!

me! Suppose now the terrible Sentence were pass'd upon me. And that I were drove away from the Tribunal amongst an abject accursed Company, my self abject and accursed: That I were looking back upon the Light, and Joy, and Blifs of the Just, which I might have been with, but had now lost for ever. That I were now plunging with the condemn'd Crew into everlasting Flames, and now the Prison were closed upon me, and my everlasting Banishment from Light, and Joy, and Comfort were for ever settled and fixed: And restless Wo, bitter Sorrow, exquisite Torments, heavy Despair were begun, never, never, to have an End. Let these things, I say, be often and seriously considered and applied to himself by any Sinner, as what will be the certain consequent and fruit of his Sins, if he does not leave them, and surely this must make him leave them.

To conclude,

Since such thing as these shall certainly be, and all Mankind must unavoidably be divided between these two different Fates; It is very reasonable that we do thus consider them; and that we seriously examine the nature and tendency of our present course of Life, to understand which of these two it is likely to bring us to. Thus we shall be warned to forsake the ways of Condemnation and Misery, and be encouraged to take the way that leads to Honour and Happiness. Which that we may do, God of his infinite Mercy grant, through *Jesus Christ*.

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The PRAYER.

GREAT, Righteous and Holy God ; the Judge and Governor of all the World ; Thou doest whatsoever thou pleasest in Heaven and in Earth, and governest thy Creatures in wonderful wisdom, with exact Justice, and irresistible Power. Lord, thou art he whole we are, whom we are bound to serve, whose Laws we ought to make the Rule of our Thoughts, Words and Actions. But, alas, how inconsiderate of these things do we live ! We seldom think of Thee, or concern our selves whether we do please or displease Thee in the Course of our Lives. We forget that thou compassest our lying down and our rising up, and art acquainted with all our ways. We do not consider that thou wilt bring us into Judgment for all our behaviour, nor lay to heart the weight and importance of the Rewards and Punishments which thou hast prepared for those that do well or ill. Hence it is that we follow our own Lusts and Humours more than we regard thy Will ; we comply with the foolish and sinful practices and Customs of this World, rather than obey thy Law : We hunt after the Wealth, or Honours, or Pleasures of this World only, and desire and seek them more than thy glorious and exceeding great Rewards : And we chuse the Pleasures of Sin, which are but for a season, rather than those Rivers of Pleasures which are at thy right hand for evermore. We fear the wrath of Men more than the wrath of God, and shun the Inconveniencies of this World with more Industry and Care than the eternal Torments of Hell. This our way, O Lord, thou knowest is our Folly, and we with Shame confess it, and condemn our selves for it. Let us not then add Madness to Folly, and obstinacy to our Sin, by continuing in the same foolish and guilty Course. We are infinitely obliged to thee, O Lord, for that it hath pleased thee yet to spare us, that we have not already perished in the ways of Perdition : And we are obliged to thee, for giving us this sight of our Folly. O Father of Lights, and Giver of every good and perfect Gift, make us, we beseech thee, for the future, wise unto the Salvation of our Souls. Make us to see thee always before our Eyes, that we may fear thee

and

and depart from all Iniquity. Let a lively sense of thy continual observance of us in the performance of our Duty make us diligent, and faithful, and fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. And let a firm Belief of thy bounteous Rewards animate and encourage us to despise all Difficulties and Dangers, and to persevere with Patience in well-doing. We are poor, weak Creatures, O let thy Grace Strengthen as well as incline us to do well. Look mercifully upon our Infirmities; pity and heal them. Pardon our defects, and accept our imperfect Services; and let us attain thy everlasting Rewards, through the Mediation of Jesus Christ, who is the Lord our Righteousness. By his Merits alone do we expect to find Favour, and on him we rely for our final Salvation. Grant us, O Lord, such a share in his Merits, and in his Grace, that in the last Day, when he shall come in his Glory to judge both the quick and dead, we may rise to the Life immortal through him.

Have mercy, we beseech thee, upon all Men; Convince all the World, that thou hast appointed a Day wherein thou wilt judge the World in Righteousness, and thereby bring them to Repentance of all their Evil. Make those in thy Church sensible that to whom much is given, of them much will be required; that they may be careful to live as becomes the Gospel. O let us know, that it will be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* in the Day of Judgment than for us, if we do not answer the Instruction we enjoy, and the Religion which we profess, with suitable Holiness of Heart and Conversation. Make all Kings, Princes and Governors to know that thou art King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and that they must be accountable to Thee, tho' they are not so to Men: that they may stand in awe of thy Judgment, and rule to thy Glory and their Peoples welfare. Make all the unruly People of the World sensible, that all must appear before thy Judgment-seat; that thou art able to do with them what thou plearest, that no strength nor number of Factions can enable them to escape thy just Vengeance; but though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished. Let all that are more nearly related to us have the Grace to fear thee, to be so mindful of the Account which they must one day give of their Actions, that they may take care to glorify Thee, and do all their duties towards Men in their several relations. We

give Thee thanks for the Mercies of this Day (spiritual and temporal, beseeching thee to give us Grace to make a good use and improvement of all. We humbly commit our selves to thy good Providence this night, beseeching Thee to give us safe and comfortable rest: And we pray, That if it pleases thee to give us yet more days in the Land of the living, they may all be spent to thy Glory, and our own Comfort, through Jesus Christ; in whose Name we present all our Requests, and in whose Words we conclude them,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And ledd us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

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T H E

Excellency of Holy Scripture

Prov'd and Applied.

Let us Pray.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorifie thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psal. 19. 10.

*More to be desired are they than Gold, yea,
than much fine Gold, sweeter also than ho-
ney and the honey comb.*

TH E Psalmist here, from the 7th verse of this Psalm sets himself industriously to recommend so much of the Book of holy Scripture as was then written. He endeavours to express the Excellency and Worth of it; to shew his own Esteem and Value for it; and to possess others with the same. And, as if this could not be easily and soon expressed, he often varies his Phrase in speaking of it; gives it several very excellent Names, and ascribes to it many happy Effects. After he had thus absolutely recommended it, he comes to com-

pare it with the valued things of this World, and as a Conclusion from what he had said before, he prefers it before those things: saying of the Holy Scriptures, *more to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.*

Under the Names of *Gold* and *Honey*, he means the Wealth and Pleasures of this World; the alluring precious things in the Esteem of Men which divide between them the Inclinations and Pursuits of almost all Mankind.

We may observe a very elegant Gradation in his Expression of this matter; these are *more to be desired than gold*, yea, than *much Gold*, or *much fine Gold*; they are a better Treasure than that; And they are *sweeter than honey and the honey-comb*, or than the droppings of the *Honey-comb*; that is, than *Honey* taken immediately from thence. They are sweeter than sensual Pleasures at their greatest height, when they relish most, and before they come to be flat and dull. We must understand he means these Writings are much more profitable, more useful to us, in the Effects which they are fitted to have upon us, which he had mentioned before, than the Riches of this World; and the Advantages we may derive from them have infinitely more pleasure and satisfaction attending them, than any the most pleasant things of this World can afford. But if such things as these could be said of only so much of the sacred Writings as was extant in his time, in which many of those great things which are now plainly and largely made known to us were but sparingly and obscurely revealed, then how much rather may they he said of what we have?

In speaking to this Subject I shall follow the Psalmist's Method here, and shew,

First, The Excellency and Usefulness of the Sacred Writings absolutely considered; upon the account of

VOL. II. The Worth of H. Scripture. 103

of which they are worthy to be preferred before those things which he compares them with.

Secondly, I shall from thence demonstrate, that they are justly preferable to the best things of this World.

Thirdly, I shall shew how our Value, and Preference of them ought to be exercised and express'd.

I begin with the first of these: to say somewhat absolutely concerning the Worth or Usefulness of the Sacred Writings: I might in several ways demonstrate this; but because the Psalmist here recommends the Holy Scriptures from the happy Effects which they are fitted to produce, I shall only insist upon that Head of Arguments. And I shall content my self to mention these two general Effects as what will abundantly recommend them.

I. They are excellently fitted to cure all the Diseases of the mind of Man, and to accomplish it with the most noble and divine Qualifications that it is capable to possess.

II. They are useful to the bringing us into a state of Favour and Reconciliation with God. These are very advantageous and profitable Effects, and such as much Happiness and Pleasure will infallibly attend.

First, They are excellently fitted to cure all the Diseases of the Mind of Man, and to accomplish it with those most noble and divine Qualifications which it is capable to possess. They are an excellent and fit Instrument for these purposes, though they are indeed but an Instrument; and the Holy Spirit of God, who is the wise Author of them, is the chief or efficient Cause in those happy Operations. He has made them very fit and useful in themselves, insomuch that the due and serious use of them does not fail of having a good Effect: And as he ordinarily honours them so far as to give a Blessing to such

use of them, so He honours them too in the common judicial abandoning of those Persons who neglect and despise them, to the most monstrous and unreasonable Errors, or the most shameful and mischievous Vices. Now they are fitted and useful to cure and adorn the Mind of Man upon these two accounts.

1. As they contain the most perfect and sublime Rules of all Holy and Vertuous Living.

2. As they propose to us and bring to our knowledge the most weighty Inducements and Motives to the observing of those Rules.

(1.) I say, The Sacred Writings contain the most perfect and sublime Rules of all Holy and Vertuous Living. They are a source of a true and divine Wisdom, of that which *makes a man's face to shine*, Eccles. 8. 1. or puts a noble and most amiable Lustre upon all his Actions. This Body of Rules is the Work and Contrivance of him *whose works are all perfect*, Deut. 32. 4. therefore is this so too as well as others: Accordingly the Psalmist says of it in the 7th Verse of this Psalm, *The Law of the Lord is perfect*. And the Apostle Paul says in 2 Tim. 3. 17 *It is able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work*. These Rules direct us to all that is wise and good, that is agreeable to right reason, and fit for us to do: and they forbid all that is absurd, unreasonable and unbecoming us, *through thy Precepts I get understanding*, says David, *therefore I hate every false way*, Psal. 119. 104. These Laws are in themselves Holy, and Just, and Good, and are therein very fit to make us so. This Book alone teaches the utmost and sublimest Perfection of all Vertue, as it directs us to obey all the Laws and Rules, of Vertue in Obedience to God, and to do all for the Glory of the great Creator and Sovereign of the World. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. The Rules

Rules of this Book reach to every Circumstance and state of Life, to all our relations both towards God and towards Man. So that there is no Case can happen but may meet with an evident Determination here, if Lusts, and Humours, and worldly Interests, do not byass the Minds of Men in their Interpretations of them. Yet further, They reach the Heart of Man, and regulate the Thoughts and Motions of his Soul as well as his outward Actions; hence 'tis said, the Word of God is *a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. 4. 12. Indeed, if we well observe these Rules, and take notice how exactly they meet the Extravagances of our Minds, we shall be forced to conclude, that he who framed them must needs know us well, and be intimately acquainted with the darkest and most deep Recesses of the Heart of Man; He knows us better than we know our selves, and this we may justly reckon is the ground of some Laws, as well as of some disciplinary Dispensations which we do not very well understand our selves. Upon all these Accounts the Psalmist says of this Book, *I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad*, Psal. 119. 96. Thus it is fitted to cure our Errors and Defects, and to possess us with all noble and excellent Qualifications.

(2.) But it has a further very necessary fitness and usefulness to this happy purpose. As it proposes and sets before us the most weighty Inducements to the observance of these Laws and Instructions: It does very strongly move and invite us to a good and vertuous Life. This it does, when it represents this to us as an Imitation of the ever-blessed God, as a Conformity to the most Excellent Being, as advancing us to the matchless honour of being and acting like him. This Argument was urged by the greatest Lover of Mankind *Jesus Christ*. When he had required the most eminent degrees of Love and Good-

Goodness toward our Neighbour in the *Love of enemies*, in *blessing them that should curse us, and praying for them that should despitefully use us*, Matth. 5. 44. he adds this Enforcement to his Precept in the 45th Verse, *That ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven*, that is, that ye may resemble and act like him. He enforces such things again in the 48th Verse, *Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect*. In Luke 6. 36. he argues thus, perhaps at another time saying, *Be ye, therefore merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful*. And this sure is a very considerable Argument, and fit to prevail with any Man that wisely loves himself; To know that he shall thus advance himself to the highest Honour, and put the greatest Glory and Lustre upon his Actions; To know that Obedience is Conformity to God, that in Submitting to his Commands, we put on his divine and glorious Nature. That which is his Honour and Excellency, who is the greatest and most excellent Being, and whose Nature must be the Rule of Excellency in all other Beings, must needs be our greatest Honour and Commendation.

Again, The Holy Scriptures farther induce us to a Good Life by frequent Assurances, that it shall be rewarded with all manner of Good. They tell us, *Psal. 34. 15. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous*, intimating, that he does continually regard them; *and his ears are open to their cry*, to shew his readiness to hear and help them. They say, *No good thing of this Life will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*, *Psal. 84. 11.* nor will he suffer *any evil thing to befall them*, *Psal. 91. v. 10.* any farther than as both these may be necessary to their spiritual and eternal Advantage, to make them the happy Possessours of some greater Good, and to deliver or defend them from some greater Evil. And then for the next Life, as they do promise another which shall not be frail, transitory or mortal, like this, so they promise

promise it shall abound in Joy and Felicity; it shall be made happy in the perfection of our Nature, in the Society of wise, and kind, and glorious Spirits, and in the Enjoyment of God who is the infinite Fountain of Good.

Further, the Holy Scriptures move us very strongly to a good and vertuous Life; As they represent to us the Son of God dwelling among Men in our Nature; as voluntarily making himself subject to this Law; as punctually and chearfully observing it through the whole Course of his Life. Thus we have seen the Practicableness of all Vertue, and that he has born himself the Yoke which he requires us to bear; and has given us therein the greatest Evidence we can possibly desire, that he requires nothing of us, but what is truly excellent and good for us, that which does really become and commend us.

Further, They represent to us the mighty Inducement that we have to live well in the Passion and Death of *Jesus Christ* our Saviour. In letting us know that he was in his Death the Sacrifice and Propitiation for our Sins; that he died to give us Life, *And he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works,* Tit. 2. 14. that in compliance with the Design and Purpose of his Death we must hate and forsake all that is sinful; and set our selves to do well in all Holiness and Vertue; and in representing that if we do not so, we do in effect crucifie him afresh and put him to open shame; we trample upon his most precious blood, and neglect the great Salvation which he has so dearly purchased for us.

These are some of the Arguments which the Holy Scriptures urge to move Men to the practice of Piety and Vertue; there are indeed many more to be found in them; but I may not stay to mention all Particulars. By what has been said, it does sufficiently appear, that these are excellently useful and
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well fitted to make Men Vertuous, Holy, and Wise; to cure and accomplish and adorn the Humane Nature to the highest Degree.

Secondly; I am now in the next place to insist upon the other Recommendation of them mentioned, which was this; They are as useful and as well fitted to bring us into a state of Reconciliation and Favour with God. If in order to this there were nothing to be done but to become good and vertuous, and it were a sufficient satisfaction and atonement for our Sins to leave them; then there were no more necessary to this effect than only to produce the former; and we should not need to have the Holy Scriptures urge or teach us any thing else to our finding favour with God, but only to amend our Lives and do well. But besides this, there is necessary to our peace with God, the satisfaction of his offended Justice for our former Sins and Rebellions. And since we are not able by any means to do this for our selves, we must be taught, that there is a satisfaction made for them by an accepted and successful Mediator, and must be directed how to obtain an Interest and Share in that Satisfaction. To which purpose the Holy Scriptures reveal *Jesus Christ* to us, and tell us of all that he has done and suffered on our behalf; and then they also direct us to repentance and amendment of Life, as one means of having an Interest in his Merits and sufferings, in the Satisfaction and Atonement which he has made for the Sins of Men. They exhort and direct us to *repent, that our sins may be blotted out*, Acts 3. 19. And tell us, that *Jesus Christ is the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him*, in giving themselves up to a holy Life, Heb. 5. 9. And thus they present Men with another very strong Inducement to such a Life; in assuring us that this is the necessary and required Condition of our Interest in the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ. And thus, as they have the

the former Effect upon us, and tend to cure and rectify our Nature, they do in a great measure advance this latter too, and tend to bring us into reconciliation and favour with God. But as there is something more that is also necessary, which is *Faith in Jesus Christ*, they also teach and direct us to that, and are very serviceable and conducing to beget and form that in us. This the Apostle intimates when he says, *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*, that is, the Doctrine of the Gospel, preached by those who are appointed by *Jesus Christ* to the Office, is the ordinary means to possess us with a saving Faith in him. The holy Scriptures are highly useful to this purpose; as they represent to us, that we are all by nature lost and undone, that we are Children of Wrath, and are become so by our Sin, that we are obnoxious thereupon to eternal Misery. Hereby they serve to rouse Men out of their common neglect of themselves, and help to cure their Misery by convincing them of it; shewing their need of Salvation and a Saviour, they dispose Men, when, such things are also revealed, to close with them. Then they propose and present to Men a Remedy to their sad case, and tell them, as that 'tis not in their own Power to save themselves; so that God has out of his infinite Compassion and Mercy *laid help for us upon one that is mighty and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him*. They propose *Jesus Christ*, as a most willing and all-sufficient Saviour; and tell us that his Death voluntarily undergone, had the Nature of a full, perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World. And then they direct us to believe in him, that is, to address our selves to, and relie upon him for Salvation; in telling us, *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life, Joh. 3. 16. that*

we may be justified freely, by the grace of God; through the redemption purchased by Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, Rom. 3. 24, 25. and many other like Instructions are those Writings very necessarily and usefully furnished with. Thus they are useful to beget Faith in us, and want nothing of being a fit and proper Instrument to bring us into Favour with God, to give us an assured Interest in his Almighty Eternal Love.

Thus I have, I think, sufficiently shewn the Usefulness of Holy Scriptures, and therein demonstrated the absolute Excellency, and Worth of them. Now the next thing I have to do is, To shew from this Excellency and Usefulness of Holy Scriptures in themselves; that they do altogether deserve to be preferred before the Profits and Pleasures of this World. If we value a Bible, as we ought, we should look upon it as our richest Treasure, and it ought to be to us, our sweetest and most delightful entertainment. Now to perform this, I need to propose but these two Considerations,

1. The Holy Scriptures are herein more useful and serviceable to the Happiness of Men in this Life, than this World's Wealth and Pleasures are.

2. They are alone serviceable and useful to the verlasting Happiness of the other Life.

1. A little Consideration will abundantly shew, That the Holy Scriptures in their due Influences and Effects are more useful to our present Happiness than the greatest Plenty and Enjoyment of worldly Goods can be. Can any thing indeed be imagined so conducing to the Happiness and Comfort of this present Life, as a well regulated Mind and Course of Actions, and the Favour of Almighty God? These can neither be purchased by the Goods of this World, nor can the want of them be supplied by the greatest abundance of them. But these are things we see

the Holy Scriptures are serviceable to.

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The Philosophers of the Heathens with the Light of Reason could see so far into this matter as to be able to say, That the Happiness of Mankind does depend more upon the temper and state of the Minds of Men, than upon their outward Circumstances. And indeed this we may every day see. VVe may often see, that Riches and Honours or sensual Pleasures cannot make Men happy. VVithout VVisdom and Vertue a Man shall squander away the greatest VVealth, shall debase and degrade his Titles and Honours in mean, brutish and vulgar Vices, and shall hurt his Body, and destroy his Health in Excesses of sensual Pleasures. VVe may see a Man's Vices and Follies making him needy and poor in the midst of a very plentiful Fortune. The covetous Man and the careless Prodigal are truly poor in the midst of Riches, they want the due use and comfort of what they have. VVhile the prodigal Man's Vices often carry him to large, unnecessary Expences, he wants what is necessary to his Credit and Comfort; he falls to the shameful necessity of *borrowing*, and to the greater shame of *not paying again*, Psal. 37. 21. He that is a Slave to Pleasure, that has no command of his Appetites, that is enflamed at every Object, lives a truly miserable Life. He is either rack'd and tormented with his inordinate Desires, or pall'd and dull, sick or melancholy with the excessive Gratifications of them. Vertue moderates and limits the Desires, makes them easie and harmless; takes away what is unnatural foolish and superfluous in them; and it is certainly a most true Maxim, that the shorter and surer way to Content and Rest, is, to retrench and govern Desire rather than to gratifie it. To the Practice of VVisdom and Vertue the wise *Solomon* justly ascribes all that is desirable in this VVorld, as what does naturally and ordinarily result from it, in saying of VVisdom, *Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand*
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riches and honour; her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. This maintains Health, and does the most that can be done towards the procuring a long and easie Life; this procures more Respect and Love from Men than any thing else can do: A person may be flatter'd upon other accounts; but can obtain a true Esteem, and a lasting Reputation and Honour only by Vertue and Wisdom, and these are attended with the noblest and the sweetest Pleasures; and with the greatest inward Tranquility and outward Peace. Thus there is nothing can conduce so much to our present Happiness as Vertue; and then there is nothing in the VWorld so useful to us as what will make us Possessors of that, and this is the great Advantage which the Holy Scriptures have above the VVealth and Pleasures of this VWorld.

And they do farther excel these, as they are serviceable to bring us into Favour with God. VWhat greater Happiness can a Man enjoy than the rich and bounteous Love of him that is Almighty and Infinitely VVise? How safe must he be who has God for his *Refuge*? How rich and well provided who has him for his *Portion*? But this Happiness no VVealth, no Riches can procure. It is not to be purchased with *thousands of Rams, nor with ten thousands of rivers of Oil.* And let us consider how very ill the Pleasures of this VWorld can supply the want of this. They trickle the Senses, and divert the Mind a little, but are not able to give it any solid Satisfaction. They are relish'd but by fits, and must be often interrupted, and laid aside, that they may please when we come to them again: But the Love of God is a steady and abiding Pleasure, and the want of that leaves the Soul comfortless and sad; empty and pining in the Intervals and Interruptions of the other. But besides, a sense of guilt and the Wrath of God does not only imbitter the Intervals
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of sensual Pleasures, but even allaiies the enjoyment of them. *In the midst of guilty pleasures the heart is often sad.* 'Tis a wounding thought if such an one happens to dart in upon the Mind, to think, Now the Almighty hates me, I displease and provoke the supreme Governour of the World; I am entertaining my self with a Pleasure that will in a few moments be at an end, but which will leave a lasting Guilt, that will doom me to eternal Pain and Misery: I ruin, I undo my self for ever, to enjoy a *needless* gratification for a few moments: And the sinner has no defence against such thoughts, but they will often invade his mind, and fill him with horror, and spoil his Pleasures. At farthest, such thoughts as these make up the harsh and bitter farewell of his best Delights. And how much better is it to be governed in these things by the Laws of Religion, the Rules of Holy Scripture; so as that we might enjoy these Pleasures and the Favour of God too! How much would it add to the sweetness of these, to have this Thought accompanying them; This I enjoy by the Favour of my God; I have it with the goodwill of Heaven; the Love of the supreme Disposer graciously gives me this Content and Satisfaction. Thus we enjoy God and the Creature too, we have both Stream and Fountain our own, and are certainly in the best manner secured of the continuance of our Happiness and Comfort. Certainly none know, but those that try and feel it, how great richness and taste the favour of God and his Blessing can give to our earthly enjoyments. The Holy Scriptures then in procuring us this are most eminently serviceable to our present Happiness.

(2.) It further shews, that they deserve to be preferr'd before the Profits and Pleasures of this World; That they are alone serviceable to our everlasting Happiness in the World to come. They
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bring Life and Immortality to Light, they have better taught Mankind the Immortality of their Souls, and the future States they are designed for, than any other means could ever do. And in curing the Distempers of our Minds, in adorning us with Piety and Vertue, in bringing us into Favour with God, they make us fit to dwell with God, and to be happy in the enjoyment of him for ever. In all their due Influences and Effects upon us they tend to the everlasting Happiness of our immortal Souls. And in this they do also, further, exceedingly promote the happiness of this Life: for thus they take away the Fears of Death; they make it even comfortable to think of that, and to expect it, when they afford us the joyful Hopes and expectations of our being thereby translated to a state of perfect Tranquility and Rest, and of endless Joy and Happiness. And as the Scriptures tend to make us holy and good, so they do likewise abundantly serve such Hopes and Expectations: they bring us then to the comfort of expecting that Happiness now, and after this Life to the unspeakable Felicity of enjoying it. Oh blessed Effects! Oh most valuable Cause! How much more useful and more pleasant is this to us in such Effects, than all that this World can afford!

And now, I think, it is evident that the Psalmist does very justly prefer the Holy Scriptures before all the best and most desired things of this World: And that we ought to do so too.

It remains then, that I do in the last place shew, wherein our preference of these is to be expressed and exercised, or what it is that the greater VVorth and Excellency of them above the Goods of this VVorld does require of us: VVhich I shall briefly represent in the following Particulars.

I. VVe must be very Industrious to acquaint ourselves with the Holy Scriptures. VVe should study them

them well, and frequently entertain our selves in reading and meditating on them. VVe must endeavour to learn those excellent Precepts and wise Instructions which they contain. Those Men certainly do not value these at all who seldom or never look into that Book; who can find no time for the studying of it, either on the VWeek days or the Lord's day; who as too many do, prefer any other Book before this, and any other employment, or even a tedious Idleness, rather than to entertain themselves with it. This must needs be exceeding guilty in the sight of God, and very highly affront and displease the VWisdom and Goodness that gave these useful Revelations to the VWorld. It does plainly affront a Law-giver, to take no notice of his Laws: And this neglect of the Bible does virtually say to God, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, Job 21. 14. VVhen we may study this Book, and will not, we do *refuse* the vast Advantages which might be derived from it. This then must be a great part of our business through our whole Lives to learn and know the Instructions of the VWord of God: this we should begin our Lives with, that we may *know the Holy Scriptures from our Childhood*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. and this should last to the end of our days, *that the hoary head may be found in the way of Righteousness*, Prov. 16. 31. If we do really value the Holy Scriptures for the blessed and happy Effects which they are fitted to produce, we shall very diligently use them to obtain those Effects by them. We must in the study of these *incline our ears to wisdom, and apply our heart to understanding: We must seek for it as for silver, and dig for it as for hid treasure*, as Solomon directs, Prov. 2. 2, 4. The Word of God cannot have these happy Effects upon us which have been mentioned, if we do not frequently converse with it. *We must meditate in the Law of God day and night, that we may observe to do according*

to all that is written therein, and if we would have our way prosperous, and live with good success; as is taught us in *Josb.* 1. 8. How ill must it needs be with the World then, and how few in it can be wise or happy, when the most spend all their days rather in the pursuit of Riches or Pleasures, than of Wisdom and Vertue! When our greatest Care is, to gain the outward Accommodations of this Life rather than these inward divine Accomplishments and Ornaments of the Mind! Here we may see the grand Original and Spring of all our Calamities and Follies.

2. We must, to express our due Esteem of the Holy Scriptures, suffer our selves to be governed and guided by them. They must have more Influence upon us, and prevail with us more, than the Profits and Pleasures of this World. The Dictates and Laws of the Word of God, must controul and regulate our desires and pursuit of wealth and pleasure the Promises it makes us must draw more effectually than the greatest Allurements of this World. Nothing indeed should have so much Power upon us as the Word of God, the Will of Heaven, the Wisdom of Heaven, the Laws of divine Love; For all the Laws of Holy Scripture are the Wisdom of Heaven, and the Laws of Love; It was Love contriv'd them, Love laid them upon us for our good and happiness. VVe can never do well in transgressing those Laws. When Pleasure or Profit and Innocence and Vertue stand in competition, this direction intimated in our Text obliges us to part with the former for the sake of the latter; to chuse rather to be vertuous than rich; and innocent than to gratifie unlawful Appetites. He that does truly esteem and value the Holy Scriptures above the things of this World, will never pursue these things in any ways which are therein forbidden. He will resolve to enjoy no more of this VWorld than he can innocently

cently attain; will deny himself and cross his worldly Interest when the Divine Laws and Rules require it.

3. Lastly, VVe must account our Religion and Vertue our dearest Possession and greatest Glory. We should value our selves more for being Christians, and living like such, than for any worldly greatness and advantages. It was, to the good Author of this Psalm, a greater Honour and Advantage in his Esteem to serve God, than to rule over Men. If it has pleased the Divine Goodness to give us any measures of his Grace, to have inabled us to conquer any foolish Lusts or Passions, to have set us in the way of Piety and Vertue, and made these familiar and pleasant to us: We must account these the greatest Favours of Heaven, and reckon God's goodness has done incomparably more for us herein, than in making us rich and great if we are so; or than if he had made us rich or great if we are not so. What greater Dignity can we attain than the Favour of Heaven! What greater Excellency than Likeness and Conformity to God the most excellent Being! These are Benefits which deserve chiefly to entertain us with delightful and admiring thoughts of God's Love and Goodness; these which will not puff us up with Pride, as to meditate on our worldly advantages is very apt to do. It is often in the thoughts of a Man of this World (and he greatly delights in such thoughts) what advantages he has of others; how rich and great he is, how much finer than those he walks by, what power to do good or hurt he has, what Interest with great Men. But the wise and good Man with great delight meditates upon his conformity to the divine Nature; his Victory over his own foolish and wicked one, upon his acceptance and Favour with God the King of Heaven. And in comparison to these Advantages he

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reckons all other to be very mean and little. He knows these are eternal Advantages, and the other temporal and but of short continuance: That the rich and poor, the honourable and the mean, shall go down alike into the dust, be dealt with alike at the great Judgment, and be levelled in the everlasting Rewards and Punishments. But Piety and Virtue, and the different degrees of them, make everlasting differences among Men. The good Man is comforted in his death, the evil Man afflicted: The good Man shall rise again to Joy and Glory, the evil one to *shame and everlasting contempt*. If then we rightly understand our selves, we shall account it much more happy and desirable to be virtuous, and pious, and wise, than to have the greatest degrees of worldly riches, or the largest share or choice of sensual Pleasures.

And then certainly the Direction intimated in the Text requires, that we account our Religion our most valuable Possession; That for which we should be ready to part with all our worldly advantages, and even our lives too. It should be so preferred before outward goods, as that we should never grudge the greatest labour and pains or cost and charge that it can require to preserve and maintain this; nothing should be too dear to purchase the Liberty and Safety of our Religion. Thus our Lives and Behaviour would signify that we judge of the divine Revelations, what the Royal Psalmist here expresses, *That they are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, and are sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.*

The PRAYER.

A Almighty God ! Most Wise and Perfect ; Infinite in all Perfections : Thou art Light, and with Thee is no Darkness at all ; with Thee is infinite Understanding and an all-comprehending Knowledge : and Thou art the Father of Lights, and the Giver of every good and every perfect Gift. Thou, Lord, hast made us, and not we our selves ; and therefore also Thou knowest us altogether, and much better than we do our selves. From Thee, O Lord, we might best learn what becomes us, what our true Interest is, and wherein our Happiness lies, and in what way to attain it. To whom should we go but unto Thee for all Wisdom and necessary Instruction ; for Thou alone hast the Words of Eternal Life. And Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, and thy infinite Goodness, this Knowledge and Instruction is not withheld from us : Thou hast revealed all that is necessary for us to know, and enough to make us wise unto Salvation. Thou hast taught us, that Holiness and Vertue are our Honour, and the Perfection of our Nature ; that these are the way to Happiness : That our Happiness consists in thy Favour and Love, and in our Enjoyment of Thee by receiving the Exercises of thy Love. Thou hast clearly shewn us the Source and Spring of the Misery we are liable to ; hast told us that our Destruction is of our selves, our Sin has ruin'd us ; and hast also kindly discovered a Remedy for our Guilt and Misery. Thou hast set forth thy Son, Jesus Christ, as a Propitiation for Sin through Faith in his Blood ; hast invited us to come to Him for Life and Salvation, to give up our selves to him, as a Lord to rule, and a Master to teach us, that so we may be Partakers in the Atonement he has made for Sin, may be pardoned on his Account, and recover thy Favour and Love which our Sins had forfeired and lost. We praise Thee, O Lord, we bless Thee for thine inestimable Love in the Redemption of the World by Jesus Christ, and for the means of Grace, thy Holy Scriptures. We are ashamed to think that we should little regard so great a Blessing, that we should ever neglect or despise them, that we should seldom use what would be so beneficial to us as they. Lord, of thy infinite

Mercy, put an end to this mischievous Folly, and make us for the future more conversant in those blessed Revelations which Thou hast afforded us. Make us able to discern their Excellency, Usefulness and Importance. So that we may love them, and loving, may meditate in thy Law day and night; that thy Word may dwell richly in us, and have its due Power upon our Hearts and Lives. Let it sanctifie and cleanse us from all Iniquity, and make us fruitful in all good works, bringing forth our fruit in due season. Do Thou, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our Instruction, give us the Grace so to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by Patience and Comfort of thy Holy Scriptures, we may embrace and ever hold fast the Hope of attaining everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ.

The same Mercy and Favour we implore for all Mankind; Lord, let this divine Light shine into those Corners of the World which are yet in darkness. Let the Earth be filled with Knowledge of Thee, and of thy Christ, as the Waters cover the Sea. Grant that all the Members of thy Church, who enjoy this means of Instruction, may walk as Children of the Light, and abstain from all the Works of Darkness. Prosper that part of thy Church which Thou hast planted among us in spiritual things; and be Thou our Defence against all the Enemies of thy Truth. Bless our gracious Sovereign Lady the Queen; replenish her with the Grace of thy Holy Spirit, that she may always incline to thy Will, and walk in thy Way; let her ways always please Thee, and do Thou make all her Enemies to be at Peace with her; and make us and all her Subjects, duly considering whole Authority she hath, faithfully to serve, honour and humbly obey her, in Thee and for Thee, according to Thy blessed Word and Ordinance. Make us always happy in our Royal Family, in their Wisdom and Love to us, and their Dominion over us. Illuminate all Bishops, Priests and Deacons, with true Knowledge and Understanding of thy Word, that both by their Preaching and Living they may set it forth and shew it accordingly. Possess all that are related to us with the wisdom from above, to thy Glory, and their present and eternal Happiness. We praise thy Infinite Mercy for the Word which we have this day heard, and earnestly we desire that it may accomplish in all of us the good purpose for which thou appointedst it. Pardon, O Lord,

Lord, we pray thee, the Iniquity of our Holy things; Protect us this night, and the remainder of our days from all Evil bodily and spiritual, and bestow upon us such good things as Thou seeest most expedient. All we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our only Saviour and Redeemer.

OUR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the Glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

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REPENTANCE

Urged from

The Coming of CHRIST.

Let us Pray.

PREvent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorifie thy Holy Name, and finally by thy mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Matth. 3. 1, 2.

*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of
heaven is at hand.*

THERE is at all times too much occasion to preach Repentance, from the general Corruption and Wickedness that spreads it self among Mankind. And it is never unseasonable for any one to practise this, since we have daily occasion for it by our daily Offences; as our Saviour himself intimates, in directing us every day to pray for the Forgiveness of our Sins. Yet, if we consider, that this was the chief Subject of the Baptist's Preaching, as our Text shews that also our Lord himself almost at the same time began

began his Preaching too with the same Subject, as appears *Matth. 4. 17.* and that he directed his Apostles also to insist upon the same, as we may see *Mark 6. 12.* From these things it is doubtless allowable to conclude, That, *as there is a time for all things*, so, there are some particular seasons which do more especially require and call for the Preaching and Practice of Repentance. I shall not stay to take notice of any other Circumstance of that time in which the Baptist urged this, than only what is mentioned in the Text, which we have expressed there under these words, *For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This Argument did our Saviour also urge and his Apostles likewise. Now we must know, that by these words, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*, is meant, That the time and days of the long expected *Messiah* were now beginning. The time was come when he should be exhibited and revealed to the World. The time of Christ's coming had been prophesied of under the Name of *The kingdom of God*, *Dan. 2. 44.* which signifies the same thing with *The kingdom of heaven.* And the *Jews* themselves understood and expected the times of the *Messiah* under that Name; so that the Argument is this, Repent, for the *Messiah* is now come, and beginning to exhibit himself. The coming of the *Messiah* is a season for Repentance, to prepare your selves for it, and that ye may partake of the happy Benefits of his coming. And if Repentance was so particularly seasonable then, and necessary to dispose and fit men to receive his Coming, 'tis also particularly seasonable at the time when the Church does solemnly commemorate his Coming into the World. This his Coming should be remembred with the same disposition of Mind, with the same affections of the Heart, with which it ought at first to be received: and it is the Church's design in celebrating the memorial of our Saviour's coming into the World, to take
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occasion from thence with the more Advantage to stir up in the Hearts of its Members such Dispositions and Affections, as are suitable to it. I therefore think it very fit in compliance with our Church's design, and to promote a due and profitable remembrance of our Saviour's coming into the World at this time, to urge and insist upon Repentance, as his Fore-runner, as Himself, and his Apostles did, at the time of his Coming.

In the Text then, let us take notice of these two things, which were the Subject of the Baptist's Preaching, 1. An Exhortation, in these words, *Repent ye.* 2. An Enforcement of that Exhortation, in these words, *For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* These things afford, and require the insisting upon these two Heads of Discourse:

I. That I shew what is exhorted to in the word *Repent.*

II. What Argument or Reason for it is contained in this, *That the Messiah is come into the World.*

To begin with the *First* of these: The time will not allow me to give more than a brief and summary Account of the Doctrine of Repentance; and I shall contract this part of the Discourse as much as may be, because it is to be the present business rather to urge it with what this Argument contains to that purpose, than to give a large and particular Description of Repentance. It shall suffice then for to give the Import of the Exhortation in our Text, to say, That Repentance must consist of these two main Parts. 1. A Change of the Mind. 2. A Change of the Life.

1. There must be in our Repentance a Change of the Mind from that state and disposition which it was in before, to another that is contrary and new. We must have what the Psalmist prayed for under the

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the Name of *A clean heart*, instead of a polluted one, and *A right spirit*, instead of a perverse one, *Psal.* 51. 10. We must obey that Command relating to Repentance which bids *purifie our hearts*, *Jam.* 4. 8. But more particularly,

The Love of Sin, which is natural to the corrupt state of Mankind, must be turned into an Hatred of it, and the disdain and neglect of Holiness and Vertue which was in the Mind before, must be exchanged for the Love and Pursuit of that, *Te that love the Lord, hate evil*, says the Psalmist, *Psal.* 97. 10. intimating that these two things necessarily belong to the same disposition of Mind, and do accompany true Repentance, the Love of God, and the Hatred of Sin. And the Hatred of Sin must proceed from a clear Conviction of the true odiousness and vileness of that in its own nature: And the Love of Vertue and Holiness must proceed from a discerning the Beauty and Excellency of that: Accordingly we find some true Penitents speaking thus of themselves, *Through thy Precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way*; and, *I esteem all thy Commands concerning all things, to be right*; and, *Oh, how I love thy Law, it is my meditation all the day!* Another says, *The Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, just, and good*: and, *I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man*, *Rom.* 7. 12, 22.

Again, This Change of the Mind must include an hearty sorrow and trouble of Mind for our Sins; which is called Contrition. Hence the Holy Scripture, when it urges Repentance, bids Men, *turn to the Lord with weeping and mourning*; and it says, *Rent your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord*, *Joel* 2. 13. We must be heartily grieved for the Offence and Injury offered to the great God in our Sins: The Remembrance of these must be very grievous unto us, the Burthen of them must be intolerable, however pleasant they were to us in the Commission,

mission, or in what attended them. We must not be disposed to boast of our Sins, but be sadly ashamed of them. We must no more delight in doing any Evil, but have all our delight in doing Good. And this godly Sorrow must not be one single act or a transient fit of Grief only, but the very disposition and settled state of our Minds. The Penitent must have a Mind always humble and abased, never thinking of his Sins without shame and self-condemnation.

In the last place, This Change of the Mind must proceed to solemn and hearty Vows and Resolutions of forsaking all that is Evil, and of doing that which is our Duty. In this sense, *the wicked Man must forsake his thoughts*, as the Prophet directs, *Isa. 55. 7.* That which it was the constant business of his Mind before to contrive and do, That he must now take care to avoid. We must renounce the Devil and all his Works; and resolve, and make it our task, that we will keep the Commands of God all the days of our lives. We cannot truly hate Evil, and love the Commands of God without coming to these Resolutions. Thus far must the Change of the Mind proceed in our Repentance. And after all this, there must be moreover,

2. **A Change of the Life, and the Course of our Actions.** As they were all, or generally Evil before, either in the matter, end, or manner of doing them, they do now become Good, and must be so. That is not a sincere Change of the Mind, that does not continually put a Man on to endeavour this Change of his Actions, and which does not in a good measure accomplish and effect it. The Holy Scripture evidently requires this Reformation of the Life in our Repentance. *Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes* (says the Prophet in the Name of God) *Cease to do evil, Learn to do well, Isa. 1. 16, 17.* The necessity and Importance of this is taught us in the

the Story of *Nineveh's Repentance*. They did not satisfy themselves to mourn for their Sins only, or to confess and humble themselves for them, but did set upon a speedy Amendment of their Lives. They said, *Let every one turn from his evil ways*, *Jonah* 3. 8. and this in the 10th verse is that which is said to have found favour with God : for 'tis there said, *God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not*. This then must appear in our Repentance ; there must be a continued actual performance of those our good Vows and Resolutions ; and that even when we are tempted to break them, and when the Occasions and Opportunities of doing so do thrust themselves upon us. Indeed our Conversion is not perfect in this Life ; but if it be sincere and true it is usually going on and growing towards perfection. And though it must be acknowledged, that in many things we do all offend, yet it must also be said, that in most things the true Penitent does not offend, but does well. The most of his Actions are good ; and his good Actions, tho' they have some Imperfection adhering to them, yet they are in the greatest part of them good, and they are sincerely so. As for Sins of Ignorance, or Surprise, or those which by reason of their Levity easily steal from us, as a Learned Man speaks (*Hamm. Pract. Cat.*) These being accompanied with a general Sorrow for them, and with Applications for their Pardon in the Name of *Jesus Christ*, and constant Care and Endeavour that they may be as few as is possible, they are consistent, says he with a true Penitent state. And, he adds, so may also one act of deliberate Sin be which we might have avoided ; if it be presently retracted with Contrition and Confession, and a re-inforcement of our Resolutions and Endeavours against it ; and so that it be not at all favoured or indulged in us. And lastly,

ly, VVe must know, that no habitual Custom of sinning continued in is consistent with a true Repentance. Therefore 'tis said, *They that are in Christ, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof;* if these are crucified, they do not rule, nor commonly make themselves to be obeyed; and *such w alknot after the flesh, but after the spirit.*

All our Sorrow for Sin then is but pretended, and all our Vows, and Resolutions, and even Prayers against it, fall short of a true and acceptable Repentance, while we live in the practice of Sin, and frequently return to the actual Commission of it. And, on the other side it must be said, that even the Amendment and Change of life in any case which does not proceed from a Hatred of Sin and Sorrow for it, that is not a true Repentance. For a Man may leave his Sins without any true aversion for them, upon some other accounts. He may not be fallen out with his Sin truly, but only with some inconvenient Attendants on it. He could willingly follow it still, were it consistent with his interest and thriving, or with his reputation and designs in the World. And this case is usually only a changing of one Sin for another, instead of a true and hearty Repentance and Conversion from every evil way.

Thus much shall suffice to explain the Exhortation in our Text, which was the first part intended of this Discourse.

I proceed now to the *Second*, which is, to set before you the Import of the Argument or Enforcement of this Exhortation which also we have in the Text: which is this, *The coming of the Messiah, or Christ, into the world, to save sinners, should move and perswade all men to repentance.* In speaking to this, I shall shew what Argument and Reason for Repentance is contained in this thing. And this is very
necessary

necessary to be insisted on; because Men are apt to conclude even from the coming of Christ to save Sinners, that their own Repentance and a Good-life are the less necessary; they are ready to believe, that to rely upon his Satisfaction and Merits is enough to Salvation, without their own Care and Labour to do well: and so they do most perniciously and perversely turn that into an Encouragement of Wickedness which is indeed one of the greatest Motives to Holiness and Vertue. Now this Argument which St. John uses in our Text to urge Repentance by; contains and implies these four strong Inducements and Motives to it:

(1.) It was the very end and design of our Saviour's coming into the World, to bring Men to Repentance of their Sins. He designed to reconcile us to God, as well as God to us; we necessarily hate even him, since we have wronged and rebelled against Him; and the Son of God has shewn so amazing a Kindness and Love, to conquer our unreasonable Enmity; and enflame us with the Love of Him, to make us fall out with our Sins which are so offensive to God; and return to those good and holy Practices that will please Him. For this reason it was said of him by the Angel, who foretold his miraculous Birth, that *he should save his people from their sins.* And 'tis said in Tit. 2. 14. *He gave himself for us; that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* The blessed Jesus came not into the World upon a design so dishonourable to God, and disadvantageous to Mankind, as to encourage Sin and Wickedness; but he came to promote the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Mankind, by promoting Piety and Vertue. To repent of our Sins then, to cease to do evil, and learn to do well, is to comply with his design, and does declare and shew that his design was worthy of him. We must look upon this as

the Effect which he intended his living among us, and dying for us, should have, that these things should make us hate all Sin and fall in love with Vertue. And surely his Practice of Piety and Vertue is very fit to induce us to it, since it shews that we must needs do thus, that we may imitate and follow him, who proposes himself to us as a Master; and that we may please him, who has plainly shewn himself a Friend. And his dying for our Sins is very fit to make us hate all Iniquity, when we see therein God's great hatred against it, and when we consider that this it was which crucified Him, and that it does as it were crucifie him afresh. To continue in Sin under the Preaching of the Gospel, is in Effect to trample upon the Blood of Christ, and to despise that which was shed to redeem us from everlasting Misery. We set our selves against Him then, we oppose his designs, when we obstinately retain our Sins, and will not forsake them. But how monstrous an Ingratitude is there in this! We carry our selves herein as if his design were not kind and advantageous to us, but really inconvenient and mischievous, as if the Blessed *Jesus*, after all the Love he has shewn, were indeed our Enemy! How can this be deliberately and expressly thought or imagined? Yet is this extravagant Opinion of him and his design virtually and implicitly contained in this our Refusal to comply with his design. When Men will not forsake their Sins upon the Preaching of the Gospel, they do in effect say, as if the offer and desire of the Redeemer, to take away their Sins, were to take away what is good, and useful, and necessary to them. They conceal from themselves the Love of the Mediator by the Love of their Sins, and most ungratefully impute unkindness to the greatest Lover.

(2.) The coming of the *Messiah* to save is a mighty Obligation and Incentive to Repentance; Therefore

fore was this Argument so often used by the first Preachers of the Gospel. Certainly so great a Demonstration of God's Love to Mankind does require our Love to God again: What a Wonder is it that there should be a Salvation attainable by so guilty and provoking Creatures as we are! That the infinite offended Justice of God did not leave us to perish in the Condition we had thrown our selves into, and to endure the misery which we had most deeply deserved! That he should concern himself to save so poor, so unprofitable things to him as we are; and should save us at so costly a rate! That the Son of God should become a Ransome for his rebellious Creatures! Is there not herein the greatest Incentive, the greatest Obligation to love God? What plausible ground can remain after this for any hard thoughts of him, or the least aversion to him? How can we make a shift to think He has not a great Good-will to us? When we see him so little resenting the greatest Affronts, as we may speak, and exercising so great an Act of Kindness and Favour even after his Creature had abused large and bounteous exercises of his Favour. And then, if Love does appear, if most glorious Love does shine in this matter, it is a great Inducement to Love, and to abound in all the proper exercises and expressions of Love. But his Love has no influence upon us, and we do not Love him after all that he has done to win us, if we do not hate what he declares is an Abomination to him; if we do not bitterly lament whatever we have done to offend him; if we do not resolve and set out selves to do whatever will please him. These things are the Characters and Exercises of a true Love, and they are the Characters of a true Repentance. We are highly oblig'd to live no more to our selves, but to him that died for us.

(3.) The coming of Christ into the World has in it the greatest Encouragement to Repentance, there-

fore also might it be an Argument for this. Herein, How gloriously does it appear that the great God, whom we have offended, is willing and desirous to be reconciled to us? That he does not desire the death of a Sinner, but had rather that he should return to him and live; and how sure does this make it to us, that if we do return to him, we shall live? When he has provided and accepted a Propitiation and Atonement will he not readily forgive? And if he is ready to forgive, Is not this sufficient encouragement to return, and to seek forgiveness? He himself has made it easie to be obtained. The hopes of Mercy justly encouraged the People of *Nineveh* to repent: *Who can tell, say they, if God will turn, and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?* *Jonah 3. 9.* And because it is a mighty Inducement, the Prophet urges the People of *Israel* to Repentance with it, *Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way (says he) and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy, to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* But how desirable a thing is his Pardon? And how great Evils does it set us free from? What tormenting Fears are we liable to without it, of being for ever miserable? and what an Advantage is it to be rid of those Fears? And how desirable a thing is the Favour of God? How great blessings does that give us the hopes of? Even eternal Blessings. And are not these a great encouragement to repent? How much will this be to our Advantage upon these accounts? We forsake the pleasures it may be, or the profits and gains of a wicked course, but 'tis for greater far, and more durable riches and pleasures. In Repentance we leave the Course, which cannot profit us, which can never make us happy, for that which will do so. We leave the ways of Perdition and Misery, for those of everlasting Blessedness and Glory: These things follow our regaining the Favour

your of God by our Repentance, and so make the Coming of Christ, which assures that, a very great encouragement to it.

(4.) Lastly, This Argument for Repentance does also include and signifie, that it is absolutely necessary to our partaking in the Benefits of the *Messiah's* coming. *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, signifies, Repent, that you may be partakers in the Blessings of that Kingdom: As it intimates, that if we do repent, we shall be so, which is the Argument last insisted on; so it intimates, that if we do not repent we shall never partake; that this is as indispensably necessary as it is certainly useful and conducing. This indeed is consequent upon what was said before: That it was the Design of our Saviour's coming into the World, to save Men from their Sins and to bring them to Repentance. For, Is it to be imagined possible that we should partake in the Advantages of his Design without complying with his Design? or, that he should save us, when we will not be saved? If Men will not part with their Sins, they do therein say, They will not be saved. He certainly has not his Design upon us, if we will not let him have his Design upon us, and then we must needs go without the Blessings which he came to bestow. This is a great and fundamental Benefit, the separating between us and our Sins, if this be not effected, all else are hindred. We may therefore often see Repentance insisted upon in the Gospel as the required Condition of Pardon and Salvation. 'Tis said there, *Repent that your sins may be blotted out*. And *Jesus Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour*, to rule and save, to be obeyed, that we may be happy; and to give repentance and remission of sins; not the latter without the former. We shall then have no interest in him without this: We shall perish notwithstanding the Coming of a Saviour into the World, if we do not forsake our Sins. And our

perdition will be exceedingly aggravated by his Coming? when our own Consciences will lash us with this rebuke, that we might have been saved, and would not; Salvation was offered, and refused; the Son of God came to save, but we would not comply with Him; we slighted his Love. VVe must needs fall under the greater VVrath from God for this, and the greater Indignation against our selves.

These are the Arguments for Repentance, which are contained in the Coming of *Jesus Christ* into the World to save Sinners; and by these things, I think, it does very sufficiently appear, that this is no just or reasonable encouragement to Sin, but rather a great engagement to forsake it.

That it may be effectually so to us, I shall now, in the close of this Discourse, consider and remove that deceitful Imagination which in many Men frustrates and disappoints all the Arguments for Repentance that can be urged upon them.

Men are truly unwilling to part with their Sins and this sets them upon devising Excuses for their not doing it when they are pressed with Arguments to repent. And, among others, this is a very common and a fatal one. They hear that Repentance is the Gift of God; and that the Holy Spirit, who works it in Men, is in his motions like the Wind, which is not at our beck or command, but blows where, and when it listeth. From hence they conclude they have nothing to do towards their Repentance, since it is not a thing in their own power: That 'tis in vain for them to attempt or set about it; when the Grace of God comes, they shall repent though never so unwilling, and before that they cannot though they would never so fain do it. So they satisfy themselves to go on in their Sins, pretending to wait for the good hour, when they shall be converted, if they belong to the Election of Grace.

A very dangerous and mischievous Imagination this

is, such as stifles all good motions; and rejects even the operations and workings of the Holy Spirit, while they pretend to wait for them.

I shall endeavour to remove and cure it by the following considerations.

(1.) It is true, Repentance is the Gift of God; but this is a Gift which he offers to Men, when by his Ministers and the Ordinance of Preaching he calls upon them, and urges them to repent. If they will obey those Calls, and set about complying with his Invitations, they shall partake of Grace sufficient for the Work. I may say, he now offers his Grace to all that hear this Exhortation to Repentance; and they shall partake of it, if they will set themselves forthwith to comply with the Exhortation, if they will now resolve and from henceforth endeavour to forsake their Sins: but if we neglect and defer to do this, we reject and refuse the Offer of his Grace, and we forfeit and lose it. And then we go without his Grace; not because God does not give, but because we refuse. As his Ordinances are the appointed Means to convert and save Men, so a sufficient Grace attends the administration of them, which no Man that does partake of them does want, but by virtue of his own neglect and refusal. Hence it is that Wisdom speaks thus to the obstinate Sinners in the Church; *I have called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hands, but no man regarded: Ye have set at nought all my Counsel.* Prov. i. 24, 25.

2. It may be said, That though we cannot convert our selves, nor give our selves the Grace of Repentance; yet we can do those things upon which it shall certainly be given us of God: and though we do not merit, yet we shall certainly obtain it by a steady, resolved, and unwearied application to such endeavours. That we can do such things upon which the Grace will follow and be given us of

God; appears by such Scriptures as these; *Wash ye, make ye clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, Isa. 1. 16. And, Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. And, Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; purifie your hearts, ye double minded, Jam. 4. 8.* These Expressions must signifie, that we can at least do something towards our own Conversion and Repentance; and that we can do those things upon which it will certainly follow: We must exercise our own natural powers and faculties about this important Concern, and therein co-operate with the Grace and Spirit of God. For instance, He that is sensible he wants this Grace, can desire it; he can pray for it, and he can pray without ceasing, till he does succeed and obtain; and a steady, obstinate Praying for this shall certainly prevail. Certainly there is no Man can say, he is not able to do this if he would; there is no Man that ever earnestly tried, and yet found he could never pray for this Grace. The common reason why Men do not pray is, because they cannot find in their hearts to do it (as we speak;) the Love of their Sins with-holds them; they cannot prevail with themselves to do it; all which amounts to this, that in truth they *will not*; they do it not, because they *will not*; not because they *cannot*. Again, He that needs the Grace of Repentance may endeavour to meet with the Arguments and Motives to it in Hearing the Word of God preached, in conversing with wise and religious Friends, or in reading of good Books. And if general Arguments for this do not teach him well, but he wants to be acquainted with the particular Remedies against the Sin that does most easily beset him; he may betake himself to the Spiritual Physician, make known his Case to a Minister, and receive them from him. These things every Many has a natural Power to do. And then, when he is furnish-

ed with Arguments and Remedies against Sin, he can use them; he can contemplate and meditate on them, let them dwell in his mind, often have recourse to them, make them familiar to his Thoughts, and so have them ready to check and restrain him when Temptation or Lust move him to do wickedly. Certainly it is not to be said, That a Man cannot do these things; or, That he does them not, only because he cannot do them, and not because he will not.

But then perhaps it will be said, How does it appear, that if a Man will steadily do those things which he has a natural Power to do towards his Conversion and Repentance, that this shall certainly follow and be given him of God? To this I answer:

I think the Holy Scripture has so evidently and clearly intimated this, that there is no room left to doubt of it. For, What less than this can be the meaning of that Scripture? *He gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke 11. 13. And, as every good and perfect Gift comes down from God; so, *If any man lacks wisdom, and asks it of him, who gives to all men freely, and upbraids not, it shall be given him*; James 1. 5. The Expression is in a manner doubled, to double the Assurance. This is plainly intimated too in God's appointing means of Grace, and Ministers to dispense them. He directs us to use means, not to mock us, but because he will bless and succeed the diligent and constant use of them. There is a most faithful Promise of this virtually contained in his directing and commanding us to use them. If they are not effectual, 'tis because Men use them formally, and without Care and Endeavour to receive Benefit by them; Or, because it does not come very sensibly as soon as they try, they grow quickly weary of attending for it. Again, this is plainly intimated too, in that they are threatned with the forer Condemnation who have enjoyed the Means of

of Grace, and have not been converted by them: as when 'tis said, *It should be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for such.* This plainly shews, that we are guilty, when the means of Grace have not their due effect upon us; this is from our own fault, 'tis because we do not use, or do not carefully and diligently use them, not because they are destitute of God's grace and blessing. We could not be guilty in the inefficacy of the Means of Grace upon us, if our own perverse and stubborn Wills were not the Cause of it.

3. Lastly, Let it be considered, That if a Man does find himself truly willing immediately to repent upon his being urged to it, and his willingness does proceed so far as to make him set immediately upon the Endeavour of it (as, if it be sincere, it will do,) he shall certainly succeed; he shall never have reason to say, He cannot repent though he would; for it is the Grace and Spirit of God that has brought him to this. Thus far has this proceeded with him, and will go on; he that has thus given to will, shall also work in him to do; for this is his good Pleasure. This will certainly be; if a Man does not stifle these Motions; if he does not oppose them, by carnal and worldly Reasonings; if he does carefully cherish and maintain them, and does not let them die; by suffering himself to be diverted from his important Business by the Cares or Pleasures of this World. Thus, I think, this Excuse appears to be a very vain and foolish one: It is indeed an Invention and Delusion of the grand Enemy of our Souls; a Trick to cheat us of the offered Salvation. Let us resolve then, That nothing shall divert us from a sincere and thorough Repentance, that so we may be Partakers of the Blessings which Jesus Christ came to bestow upon Mankind. To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, World without end.

The PRAYER.

O Most merciful and gracious God, infinite in Goodness and Mercy, a God forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin. Thou art exalted infinitely above all thy Creatures; Thou hast highly obliged us whom thou hast made, and dost continually preserve; Thou givest us all that we enjoy; In thee it is that we live, move, and have our being. We are upon many accounts bound to love and serve thee, to let our selves to please thee, and to live intirely to thy Honour and Glory. But we, wretched and vile Creatures, have, alas! forgotten all these Obligations: We have lived to our selves and served divers Lusts, rather than we would live to thee; We have broke thy Laws, despised thy Will, and followed our own in any manner of contradiction to thine. We have grievously sinned against thee in thought, word and deed. And there is in our Sins Ingratitude to our best Friend, Rebellion against our rightful Sovereign and Lord, Affront of infinite Perfections, and in a manner an infinite Guilt. In this Case, O Lord, we must acknowledge, that we might justly be utterly thrown out of thy Favour; thou mightest have cast off all Mankind to inevitable Ruin, as thou hast done the apostate Angels. But, thanks to thy Mercy, thou hast accepted an Atonement for our Sins, and art willing to receive, even so guilty Creatures, into favour upon our Repentance. It is the Voice of thy wondrous Mercy, Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return to me, and I will have mercy, and will abundantly pardon. O glorious Goodness! How should it conquer our hard hearts, and bend our stubborn wills, and bring us down into the dust before thee in humility and repentance! It is not because thou hast any need of us or our happiness, that thou art so ready to be reconciled to us, but because thou delightest not in the death of a Sinner, but hadst rather that he should turn to thee and live. Thou hadst rather save than destroy, and pardon than punish. Oh, that we were disposed to answer thy Mercy as we should!

should ! We ought, O Lord, to be as ready, to return to thee, as thou art to receive us ; to forsake out Sins, as thou art to pardon them ; to lay aside all enmity to thee, as thou art to be reconciled to us. We have no just cause of enmity against thee, as thou hast against us. What is there then should hinder us from returning to thee, and to our duty ? Oh, Let the hopes of Mercy then bring us to it ! Let us not persist in an opposition to thee which is so unreasonable and unjust : let us not be so extremely foolish, as to add to all our other guilt, the contempt and refusal of offered Mercy. Oh, Make us seriously to lay to heart what our condition must needs be if we do so ! How great and sore Condemnation we shall incur. And give us, we beseech thee, a true Repentance. Grant us thy Holy Spirit, whom thou hast promised to give to them that ask him ; and give us the Grace to amend our Lives from henceforth according to thy Holy Word. Turn our disobedient hearts to the Wisdom of the Just, that at the Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour, we may be found acceptable in thy sight, through the Merits of Jesus Christ.

In his Name we humbly pray unto thee for all Men, Enlarge the Borders of our Saviour's Kingdom on Earth, and give him the Heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the Earth for his Possession ; that he may every where deliver wretched Souls from the Dominion of the Devil, and bring them into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God. Grant that all who name the Name of Christ may depart from Iniquity, and adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in holy and vertuous Lives. Have Mercy, we pray thee, upon the Nations to which we belong ; make us, under thy Chastisements, to search our ways, and turn unto the Lord with true godly sorrow and deep repentance ; and do thou, we pray thee, pardon and heal us. Bless us in the Continuance of Her whom thou hast set over us, and in giving good Success in all her Undertakings, to the promoting thy Glory and our Welfare. And make us, and all her Subjects, dutiful, and obedient, and comfortable to her. Let every Soul of this Family be a Member of thy Kingdom of Grace here, in truth and reality, and be admitted to thy Kingdom of Glory hereafter. We thank thee, O Lord, that the means of Grace and the Space to repent are still granted to us. Let thy Word which we have this day

day heard, search our hearts, and turn us from all that is evil. We pray thee, protect us this night, and our habitation, from evil accidents. In thee, O Lord, we put our trust; by thee let us dwell safely, and never do thou leave nor forsake us, till thou hast brought us to Glory, for the sake of Jesus Christ; In whose Words we further recommend our Requests, saying,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

RE.

Religious Meditation.

Stated and Recommended

Let us Pray.

PREVENT us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee; we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Joshua i. 8.

This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou shalt Meditate there in Day and Night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way Prosperous, and then thou shalt have Good Success.

THE Light of Nature saw Mankind to be grossly corrupted and depraved; apt to live below their Reason and beside their true Interest: And those who were in some measure recovered from the Common Corruption, as they were there

thereby inabled to see this, so they have earnestly endeavoured to cure it. A multitude of Books have been written to make Men Vertuous and Wise: These things are so necessary to the Honour and Credit of the reasonable Creature, and to the Happiness of Mankind both single and in Societies, that many have applied their utmost Skill and Endeavours to promote them in the World. A very good Design this was, altogether becoming good and vertuous Men, and very God-like; and their Works of this sort are of great Worth, and well deserving to be consulted. But after all that the most wise and learned Men have done to this purpose, those Writings which we justly call the Holy Scriptures are undoubtedly the best fitted for it; And it is no wonder at all that they should be so, for these were written by the Inspiration and Direction of Him who alone is Perfect in all Wisdom and Goodness, and who fram'd and made up the Humane Nature, and therefore must needs know best what is really Defective or Superfluous in us, and what is most fit to have Influence upon us, and to accomplish our Amendment. Accordingly the Holy Spirit of God has in great Wisdom and Goodness furnish'd these Writings with all that was necessary, to make them useful and fit to this purpose. And as he there prescribes the best *Rules* and *Laws* of all Holy and Vertuous Living, and does very forcibly and earnestly urge the most weighty *Inducements* and *Motives* to our observance of them; so he does also very kindly prescribe and direct us to the fittest *Means* to bring our perverse Natures to a due Conformity with those *Rules*. He directs that we pray to God for his Grace *who is the Author and Giver of every Good and Perfect Gift*; that we read his Word diligently; that we duly attend upon the Ordinance of Preaching, in which by his appointment his Word is opened and applied to us by them who are also appointed

ed by Him to that Office: And especially we may observe what is directed in our Text to this purpose, which is, that we should *Meditate in his Law Day and Night, &c.* Meditation on Divine Things is perhaps the most important of all the Means of a good Life, as it is that by which all other Means have their Influence and Effect. I shall therefore at present insist upon this, and shall endeavour to Discourse upon it so, as that they who have been the greatest Strangers to it, may learn to practise it to their advantage; and they who have been Averse, may be reconciled to it.

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It shall not depart out of thy Mouth; that is, The things contained therein, shall be the Subjects of thy Discourse, when Season and Opportunity will allow the discoursing upon them. Or they shall very frequently be in thy Mouth: Or it may be understood to mean, that the Law of God should be the constant Rule of his common Discourse, and especially of all his Commands to the People of *Israel* who were committed to his Conduct: And thus should the Word of God be regarded by us. To which purpose it must dwell richly in us, as the Scripture speaks, and have

have possession of our Hearts; for 'tis out of the Abundance of the Heart that the Mouth speaketh. And therefore 'tis added here in order thereto,

Thou shalt Meditate therein Day and Night. Thou shalt take all the Opportunities which thou canst have, not neglecting other Duties for Meditating on the Law of God: Thou shalt frequently and seriously read, hear and consider it; or, in the Language of our Church, shalt read, mark, learn and inwardly digest it.

That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: This shews that Meditation on the Word of God is a good means of an Holy and a Good Life; and it tells us rightly for what we should study and Meditate on it. The End to which this is to be directed, is not to find out and maintain new Opinions, nor to dispute for this or that Party, not to fill our Heads with vain speculations, or that we may seem Men of much Knowledge; but that our Discourse may be good and Wise, and our Actions Pious and Vertuous: *That we may observe to do according to all that is written in the Law of God.* And that this Meditation, with such Design and Care, will help us to observe and do what is commanded in it, is also the Import of the last words of the Text.

Then shalt thou make thy Way prosperous, and then thou shalt have Good Success. The meaning of the original words thus rendred is this, Then thy Way shall be Direct and Good, and thou shalt act Wisely, and as becomes a Person of good Understanding and Prudence.

Now to pursue the Ends proposed in this Discourse, it shall be the business of it, First, to describe or state this means of an Holy Life; and Secondly, to urge the Use of it. And in both these things I shall direct the Discourse by the Text it self, and confine it to the Intimations therein afforded us.

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In the first place I shall describe and explain this Meditation on the Word of God, as it is here recommended to us, that is, as a Means of Living well: For which End our Religious Meditation must always consist of two parts, which I shall call *Consideration* and *Application*. In the first place, I say, there must be a good *Consideration* of the thing Meditated upon, as it is in it self. Secondly, There must be a close and serious *Application* of it to us. These two things well performed, will be very likely to make our Meditation useful to us.

I. In the first place, *we must well consider the Things absolutely and in themselves*: We must look well into the Nature and Reality of them, that we may enlighten our Minds with effectual Knowledge, and convince our Judgments with good Arguments; and then we must, by often consideration of them, so imprint them upon our Minds, as that we may steadily remember them, and they may be always ready to influence and direct us. We must needs understand and remember the Rule which we do rightly Govern our selves by. We must search and enquire into the Nature of the thing considered, that we may learn the Importance and Concernment of it, that we may have as clear and as distinct an Understanding of it as we can: And then we must enquire into the Reality and Truth of it, to settle in our selves a firm and well-grounded Belief of what we know; and also we must imprint it in our Memories. We shall certainly never be governed by that which we reckon to be of small importance, as all Divine Truths will be apt to seem to him who has not well enquired into the Nature of them: Nor can we be steadily governed by what we do not firmly believe, or by what we have forgotten. These things then are absolutely necessary, to the giving the Divine Truths their due Influence upon us. And herein lies one great reason, why the Doctrines of Christianity

anity have so little power over many of those who profess to have received them. They indeed never truly received them, their Judgments were never well convinced of the Truth, nor their Minds possessed with the important Nature of them. There are very few that seriously apply themselves to study and consider their Religion; And the most among us are Christians by chance as we may say: For they become such just as others become Turks or Jews, or Heathens: They are such only by Imitation, and the Custom of their Country, not upon any mature Consideration of what they are, nor upon any well-grounded Choice. And we daily see, that a Religion so taken up, is not able to govern Men; They follow their Lusts and Humours, their worldly Interests and Concerns, in an utter Defiance of all the Laws of Religion; and, perhaps, they come to account those Persons too credulous and easie, who do regard Religion, and govern themselves by it; because they know no good reason for this, for want of a due Consideration of the Matter, they think there is no good reason for it, and that no Man has any: That the Laws and Rules of Religion, are but the Inventions of Men, to keep Children and Fools in awe, or of Priests to support their Trade. It is no wonder, if the Temptation of the Devil, and a Man's own wild Lusts, do betray him into such Imaginations as these, when Religion is a thing he never looked into or considered.

But then we must not rest or stay in this Consideration of Divine Things: It is not all that we are to consider them for, that we may understand and believe them; but we must be mindful that the things are to influence and govern us in our Hearts and Lives. A wise Author (*Salés Introduct.*) says, if we do not limit the Discourse of our Reason, it will run into curious Disquisitions: Indeed this is that which we often see, that Men who consider the

Matters of Religion, without a due Sense and Application of them to the right End, do grow Nice rather than Wise, and perhaps are rather Sceptical than well confirmed in their Belief; they start more Difficulties and Objections than they can conquer; they run into many needless and impertinent Enquiries; are very apt to take up and fancy singular and odd Opinions; and to satisfy themselves with thinking that they are very Learn'd and know much, instead of endeavouring to be very Good and Religious in all their Practices. We must remember therefore, that our Meditation on Divine Things, is to be directed and made Serviceable, to the possessing our Minds with Piety and Vertue, and to the good Government of our Lives. He that encreases his Knowledge without Vertue and Well-doing, does but encrease his Guilt and condemnation too. We must therefore, to the former, join the second part of our Meditation which was mentioned, and be sure to give it its full due.

In the next place, then, it is to be said, that *we must make a very close and serious Application to our selves, of what we, by Consideration, do Understand, and Believe, and Remember.* We must apply to our selves the things which we have considered, according to the Nature of them. If I can well explain to you this part of Meditation, I shall set before you the infallible Means, whereby you may hear Sermons, and read the Scriptures with most certain and great Advantage. I shall shew you in what way the most Habitual Sinner may break off his Sins and become Religious, and every Man of us may work out his own Salvation if he will. I shall therefore very carefully endeavour to represent this rightly and plainly. And it seems to me that the Apostle Peter, as he does intimate a Command of doing it; So he gives us a Direction how to do it, in his 2d Epist. 3d Chap. Where, after he had been speaking very
sensible

sensible and moving things of the certainty of Christ's coming again, and of the awful and terrible Circumstance that should attend it; he applies these things to those he wrote to, or teaches them to do it in those words, in 11. and 12. ver. *What manner of Persons ought ye to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness, looking for and hastning to the coming of the Day of God.* Which is as much as to say, Do ye who expect such things, bethink your selves what they require of you; what Holiness and Care of your Conversations; what your Course of Living is or has been, and what it should be, that you may meet those Terrible Things without Affright and Terror. We must enquire what concern of ours is in the thing considered, what it is to us, and does require of us. Hereby we must discover the Defects and Errors in our Lives, and hereby we must know and quicken our selves in our Duty. I think, then, we may conclude that this part of our Meditation must consist of these five Exercises. 1. A setting before our selves the Obligations which the thing considered lays on us. 2. A Trial of our selves, how we have answered those Obligations. 3. Sorrow and Self-condemnation for any Defects we find in our Practice, of what we ought to have done. 4. Resolutions to amend those Defects. 5. Prayer to God that he would enable us to do so.

To make these Exercises as plain and as practicable to all Persons as I can, I shall subjoin to each of these particulars, a Practice of it upon one Head of Divinity, which will shew to the meanest Capacity how it is to be performed. And to chuse such an one as is most suitable to our present purpose, which is the promoting of a good Life, I shall chuse the Being of a God, which is a Fundamental Point of Religion: *For, as the Apostle says, he that comes to God, must believe that he is, and is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11. 6.*

Now supposing that a Man has considered this Point of Doctrine absolutely, and is come to be fully and firmly convinced, and to believe that there is a God; and also considered it so well, as to understand that God is a Glorious Incomprehensible Being, Infinite in all Perfections, and the Maker, owner, and Lord of all Beings besides himself; that He is the Fountain-Good, and the Only Happiness of Man: Then he is to apply these things to himself in the following manner.

1. We must consider and set our Thoughts upon the Obligations which these things lay upon us: We must enquire and represent to our selves, what is requisite for us to do hereupon. As for instance,

Since I find by the former part of my Meditation, that I must believe there is a God; and that He is a Being of Glorious Majesty and Infinite Perfections: That there is one first Cause of all Things, who is the Preserver and Owner, Lord and End of all: I am bound to Reverence and Fear this Excellent Being: I must never have other than Awful Thoughts, and a great Veneration and Esteem for him: I must walk Humbly with my God: I am bound to Worship and Adore his Majesty and Infinite Greatness, to obey and submit to the Common Sovereign and Lord: To devote and resign my self to the disposal of his Providence, and the direction of his Laws. He alone must be Lord over me: I must study and conform to his Will, and deny my own when ever they come in competition with each other. I must prefer his Honour before my Worldly Interests, and make him my End: I must acknowledge him in all my ways, and *whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, do all to his Glory.* I must be subject and obedient in Spirit and Truth to the Father of Spirits; and not only conform my outward Behaviour, but also the Inclinations and Motions of my

Soul,

Soul, to his Will and Laws. And since he is the Fountain-Good, and from Him the Goodness of all other things is derived, I ought in Gratitude to mount by the Streams to the Fountain, the Goodness in them, should make me love and thank him for them: And it is a due Homage to him, that I love him above all other things; and esteem and seek, as the most valuable Attainment, his Favour and Love, whereby I may enjoy him. It is my Duty, and my Wisdom and Interest to endeavour to make him my Friend; and with utmost Care and Diligence, to avoid the having such an Enemy. Thus may the first of these Applicatory Exercises be performed.

2. The next is, The Trial and Examination of our selves by these Obligations: To reflect upon our selves, and see whether we have answer'd them or not, or do answer them in the Course of our Practice: Whether we have lived, or do live, as we are obliged and concerned to do, upon the Truth and Importance of this thing. Upon this Point, then, a Man must examine himself thus, Have I born a Constant Reverence and Fear of the Great God upon my Soul? Has this attended and influenced the whole Course of my Life? Have I been wont often to think, with great Seriousness, that a Glorious and Holy Being always observes me? He has laid his Laws upon me, and the great Governor of the World, the Disposer of my Happiness or Misery, always takes notice, whether I regard and observe those Laws or not: Have I endeavoured, then to approve my self to his Pure and Holy Eyes? Have I set my self to live to his Glory whose I am, or rather to gratifie, and please, and indulge my self and my own Humours and Desires? Have I loved my great Benefactor, and made the grateful Returns of a willing and diligent Obedience for my Being, and the Comforts of my Life? Am I a Faithful Subject or a Rebel,

bel, to the Universal Sovereign? Have I made his Laws my Rule, or cast them behind my Back? Have I valued his Love, readily accepted the Offers of his Favour, and submitted to the Terms of it? Or have I refused these, and slighted both his Love and his Wrath? Have I desired to be a Partaker of his Promises, and dreaded the falling under his Threatnings, or have I slighted both these? Thus may the second Exercise be performed.

3. The next is, to Lament and Mourn over the Defects which we find in our Practice of answering these Obligations. I may mention this as generally necessary, because none are so Happy, as to be perfect in this Life; and the best have too frequent occasion to renew their Repentance: As our Saviour teaches us in his Form of Prayer, That we shall all have need to Pray for the Forgiveness of daily Sins. Let this Exercise then with all Seriousness be thus performed.

Oh wretched Man, Oh vile and miserable Sinner that I am! How unworthily have I behav'd my self towards the Great God! How have I ventured to affront and provoke him! To set up my self and my own will against him! Oh enormous Rebellion, that the thing formed should lift up it self in Contempt and Defiance of him that formed it! Woe is me, that I should strive with my Maker! Alas, how much have I liv'd as without God in the World! How little has he been in my Thoughts! He without whom I could not live one moment! How ungrateful have I been to my best Friend! I have return'd Affronts for his Care of me, Injuries for his Kindness; and have hardened my self in my Sins, by his Patience and Forbearance! And how easily have I been often induc'd to do things Grievous and Distastful to him! I have valued the Enjoyment of a Moments needless Pleasure, the gaining a little unprofitable Wealth, the good Word and Favour of a Poor Mortal Creature

ture more than the pleasing of Him! Strange that I should for any thing venture to lose his Rich, and Bounteous, and Eternal Love; that I should have no Dread of Infinite, Almighty, Eternal Wrath! Lord I must abhor, I am constrain'd to condemn my self for these things. I lie down in my Shame before Thee, and am cover'd with Confusion. I have been more Vile than the Beasts that perish: I have had my Reason in vain, and have acted most Unreasonably. I acknowledge and bewail my manifold Sins and Wickedness, which from time to time I have most grievously committed, even by Thought, Word and Deed, against thy Divine Majesty. I have provok'd, most justly, thy Wrath and terrible Indignation against me by them, I am not worthy of the least Degree or Exercise of thy Favour, I earnestly repent, and am heartily Sorry for these my Misdoings; the Remembrance of them is grievous unto me, and the Burden of them is intolerable.

4. The next thing we have to do, is to make earnest and strong Resolutions of Amendment. That we will endeavour, for the future, to answer those Obligations better, which before we have too much neglected: This *David* expresses concerning Himself, *I thought on my Ways* (says he) *and turned my Feet into thy Testimonies.* I consider'd my Course of Life found what was amiss in it, and took up Resolutions forth-with to amend it. These Resolutions must be immediately made upon the former Sense of our ill-Behaviour; and we must intend forthwith to put them in practice: We cheat our selves, and lose all our good Resolutions, if this be delayed: Therefore *David* adds to the former words, *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments,* Psal. 119. v. 59, 60. These Resolutions may be thus expressed:

I have been too Foolish and Unreasonable, I have been Ungrateful and Rebellious; but I now resolve, by the Grace of God, to be so no more
and

and from this Moment I will earnestly endeavour to forsake my Sins. I condemn my self for the Guilt and Folly which is past, and will take care for the future, not to repeat what I must needs condemn. It is high time that I now acknowledge my Creator after so long neglect of Him, and I will endeavour that the remainder of my days shall make up in diligent Service, what has been wanting in those that are past. The time past shall suffice to have done the Will of the Flesh; and a great deal too much it is to have been so employed; and now I will study, I will always strive to do the Will of God. I am amazed to think of the Long-suffering and Forbearance of God towards me! That he has spared me, during so long time of Affronts and Rebellions against him! I admire and Praise that Goodness which has given me this useful sight of my Follies before it is too late to Repent! I thank him for inviting me to return, who has no need of my Service, or of my Happiness; and I lay hold, with a most joyful Soul, upon the Promises of Pardon and Favour which are made in Christ Jesus to returning Penitents! Such Patience, such Favour towards an Obstinate Provoking Sinner quite overcomes me. I cannot chuse but admire and love him, and be drawn by such Cords to my Duty! Methinks I wish I were all Love! I were able to make some suitable return; Oh that I could render something that were not before due to him! What shall I render to the Lord for all his Benefits and Kindness! Alas, I have nothing but my Poor self; all that, then, I must readily give and devote to him: Behold, Lord, I bring and prostrate before Thee a Returning Prodigal; I bring thee thine own, and desire to be for ever, and only and entirely thine: All that I have and am I devote to thee: Whatever thou shalt be pleased to give or to make me, shall be all thine, all shall be devoted and industriously used to thy Service and Honour.

Honour. I devote my Mind and Understanding to Study and Meditate on thee; as the best Object of my Thoughts, and to esteem thee above all things else. I devote my Will to chuse and fix on thee as my chiefest Good. I devote the Affections of my Soul to Reverence and Fear thee; to Love and Admire thee. I devote my Tongue to praise thee, and all the Members of my Body to Honour thee in a steady Obedience to thy Commands. I will take thy Commandments for my Heritage and Portion; I will value them above Thousands of Gold and Silver. I will seek nothing in Comparison, nothing in Competition with the Promised Rewards of Obedience to thee.

5. And then in the last place, these Resolutions must be attended with Earnest Prayer to the God of all Grace, that he would be pleased to continue and confirm them and enable us to put them in Practice.

We may add, then, *To the Lord our God be-
long Mercies and Forgivenesses, though I have rebelled
against him: And thou hast encouraged me to return,
in assuring me, That whoso confesses and forsakes his
Sins, shall find Mercy: That promised Mercy I most
humbly seek in the Name of Jesus Christ, Whom thou
hast set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his
Blood: That Mercy I humbly hope to find, which
delights not in the Death of a Sinner, but had ra-
ther that he should turn from his Wickedness and
Live. Enter not then into Judgment with thy Servant,
O Lord: Oh Spare me a Wretch that confesses his
Faults; Restore thou him that is Penitent; accord-
ing to thy Promises declared unto Mankind in Christ
Jesus our Lord; And grant O most Merciful Fa-
ther, for his sake, that I may hereafter live a God-
ly, Righteous and Sober Life, to the Glory of thy
Holy Name. As thou hast given me to VVill, work
in me to do according to thy good Pleasure. The
Psalms of David afford us many very apt and fit Re-
quests*

quests to this purpose, which shew that Good Man to have been often in the Exercise of this Application of the Word of God to Himself: And after him we may say, *Thy Hands have made and fashioned me, Ob give me Understanding, that I may learn thy Testimonies. I am thine, Save me, I have sought thy Precepts. Ob that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes. Hold up my goings in thy Word, that my Footsteps slip not.*

These are the Exercises which the Applicatory part of our Meditation should be employ'd in. And thus I think I have sufficiently described and explained this Means of Good Living, which is in this Text recommended to us. And by what has been said, I suppose it may appear, that this is what every one, though of but small Capacity, may in some measure perform, if he will with any Endeavour set himself about it. He that has but a small measure of Memory, may supply himself with Matter and Subject of Meditation from what he hears in Publick; or a Man may be furnished with this from what he may read, or hear read to him in Private. 'Tis true, that to perform this Work most to our Advantage, it is requisite that we retire from the World and Business, and do set some time apart often for the performance of it. A few transient Thoughts on Divine things, will not be able to infuse a steady Light into our Dark Minds, nor to give warmth to our cold Hearts, or influence and govern our Averse and stubborn Wills. We must therefore often set our selves to a deliberate Meditation. And some have leisure enough to allow some time for this on every Day: And the poorest or the busiest Traders may and ought to allow themselves some time for it on the Lord's-day, besides their Attendance on the Publick Worship.

But because the due and profitable Performance of this Work. will require some Endeavour and Pains,

I think it necessary to urge it as I propose to do. And many things very considerable might be said to this Purpose, but it would make the Discourse too long to produce them all; and I have promised to confine my self within the Intimations of the Text, which affords these Arguments following.

1. This Meditation on the Word and Law of God, is it self a Duty: It is certainly required of us as a Duty, as well as it is an excellent means to bring us to the Performance of every other Duty. It was not required of *Joshua* alone, though this Text speaks to him: We may justly reckon that it speaks also to every one of us. And in other places it seems to be required of all the *Israelites* in common, that is, of the whole Church of God, or those who are favoured with these Divine Revelations; and such Scriptures must be reckoned to reach us too. To them 'tis said, *Deut. 6. 6. These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine Heart.* And in *Deut. 11. 18. Ye shall lay up these my Words in your Heart, and in your Soul.* This is intimated to be required, in that the Psalmist Blesses the Man that *Meditates in the Law of God Day and Night*, Psalm 1. And it may be inferred from the Condemnation of those who said to God, *Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways*, Job 21. 14. and of those of whom 'tis said, *God is not in all their Thoughts*, Psalm 10. 4. Indeed how can it be imagined but God does expect and require this? What are the Divine Laws publish'd for, but that we should study and learn what they require of us, that we may do it? Do we not truly cast his Laws behind our Backs, if we will never study nor consider them? Is it not an Homage due to the Universal Sovereign to consider and learn his Will?

2. Let us also consider, that this Meditation is absolutely necessary, in order to our Obedience and living well: Without some Practice of it, we can
never

never lead Holy and Good Lives. Can any Man obey that Law, the Rules of which he does not know? Or, will any Man be influenced by Truths, that he does not remember nor ever consider? All the Experience of the World makes it appear, that he who would never seriously consider the things revealed in Holy Scripture, would never be guided or governed by them. As our Conversion to a Religious Life is always wrought in this way, so it can never be wrought, but in and with the Exercises of our own Thoughts about Divine things in deep and serious Meditations on them. This is necessary, then, let us consider, to our getting free from the Bonds of Iniquity, from the Devil's Slavery; to our avoiding all the Wrath and Punishment which is due to the breach of the Divine Laws. This is, therefore what we must needs do or perish:

3. Lastly, Let us consider that it is very Useful and conducing to our Holiness and Obedience. It is as effectual and useful a Means, as it is a necessary one. This our Text very plainly intimates, when it says, *Thou shalt Meditate in the Law Day and Night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.* In like manner the Psalmist says of him that does this, that *He is like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, that bringeth forth his Fruit in due Season.* This Exercise will season the Mind and Disposition with Piety and Vertue: It will make the Tree good, and then the Fruit will be good: It will make the Rules of our Duty plain to us, and ready to our Remembrance: It will shew us the Beauty and Desirableness of Holiness, the Deformity and Odiousness of Sin, and will give all the Motives and Inducements to Religion their full Force and Power upon us. It may be learned by what is common in the World, How conducing and effectual this Meditation is to such a purpose. How usual is it for a multitude and train of Thoughts of any one kind,

kind, to form the Disposition of the Mind, and make suitable Impressions upon it ! By frequent angry Thoughts a Man becomes Fretful and Peevish ; by frequent Haughty and Self-admiring Thoughts one becomes Selfish and Proud ; by frequent Thoughts on Sensual Pleasures a Man becomes Sensual and enslaved to such Pleasure. We learn all the Knowledge that we have, by frequent Repetitions of Instruction, and employing our Thoughts about it. In this way, then, a little time and endeavour would teach a Man the Blessed Trade of Holy and Vertuous Living as well as any thing else : And he has certainly no desire to be Religious, he has no mind to forsake his Sins, who will not do thus much towards it. He neglects himself and his Salvation, he abandons himself to Sin and Misery who neglects it.

God grant we may be duly sensible of the things that make for our Peace before they be hid from our Eyes. To him be Glory for ever, Amen.

The P R A Y E R.

MOST Blessed God the Fountain of all Goodness : Thou art an Infinite Eternal Good, all things besides thee are but Streams deriv'd from thy unexhaustible Fullness : Thou hast made many excellent Creatures for our Use and Service in this World, and wonderfully suited them to our present Necessities and Desires. These thy Free Goodness has bestow'd upon Mankind, to convince us of thy Love and Good Will, to make us mindful of the Excellent and Transcending Goodness that is in thy self, from whence their Goodness comes ; to oblige and win our Averse Hearts to the Love of thee. For thou alone art our Happiness, and while we forsake and neglect thee, we must needs be Miserable. But alas ! such is our Folly and Perverseness, that the things which should make us mindful of thee, make us forget thee ; and what should engage us to
Love,

Love, steals away our Hearts and Affections from thee. We love this World, and the things of it, to that degree, that there is no Love of God in us. These means being uneffectual, thou hast gone further, to discover thy self to us, that we might Love, and Seek, and Enjoy thee, and be Happy. Thou hast largely reveal'd thy self, unto us in thy Holy Scriptures, and they are fit to make us Wise unto Salvation. But still we shew our Enmity to thee, and that we care not for the Knowledge of thee or of thy ways, in the neglect of this means of knowing thee. Thy Word, which is full of Wisdom and Divine Light, we slight and despise; we care not to Read or Meditate on it as we should do, to be profited by it. If we are left to our selves, we shall always live without God in the World, for so we encline to do. Religion, and the Acknowledgment of thee, which is our greatest Honour, our happiest Course of Living, and highly Just and Reasonable, is commonly set by among Men, and any thing else is followed rather than that. We confess, Oh Lord, while we neglect our selves, thou mightest justly neglect us; while we are fond to run from and forsake thee, we deserve thou shouldest utterly abandon us; we deserve to be left to Temptation, and Folly, and Sin, and Misery, and Ruin. But such is thy Infinite Goodness, that thou art yet loath we should Perish, therefore thy Patience yet continues us in the Land of the Living, and we have the means of Grace, we hear the Sound of thy Word, and the Invitations of thy Gospel. At length, O Lord, awaken us to a due Sense of our Condition and Concern for our selves: Make us to observe the wise Instructions of thy Word, to Treasure them in our Hearts, to Ponder and Meditate on them in our Minds that so we may observe to do according to all thy Will. Write thou thy Law, O Lord, in our Hearts, and put thy Fear in our Inward Parts, that we may learn to depart from all Iniquity; that we may learn to renounce and despise this World, and its most Alluring Trifles, and may love and follow after those Spiritual and Eternal Good Things which thy Blessed Word reveals and offers to us. Do thou, O Blessed Jesu, who camest into the World to save Sinners, now pour upon us the mighty Aids of thy Holy Spirit, stir up thy Strength and come among us, and with thy great Might Succour us, that whereas, through our Sins and Wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in the Race that

is set before us, thy bountiful Grace and Mercy may speedily help and deliver us.

We humbly pray for all Mankind, that they may by Blessed with the Light and Guidance of thy Holy Gospel: And for thy Church, where-ever dispersed upon the Face of the Earth; that all Divine Knowledge and Good Practice may abound in that. Bless, we pray thee, that part of it which thine own Right Hand has planted among us; Purge it from Error, Heresie and Schism, from Superstition and Profaneness, and whatever is displeasing to thee. Grant us to increase in all Grace, and to delight our selves in abundance of Peace. For these Purposes Bless, Defend and Direct our Sovereign Lady the Queen; Grant that this Book of thy Law may never depart out of her Mouth; that she may Meditate therein Day and Night, and observe to do according to all that is written therein; and let this make her way Prosperous, and do thou favour her with good Success. Let thy Word and thy Grace teach us all the Duties of our several Places, that we may duly perform them to thy Glory and our mutual Comfort. We thank thee for the Mercies of this day, especially for those that are Spiritual, make us to bring forth Fruit answerable to them. Let thy Gracious Protection give us Safety this Night, and thy Power raise us the next Morning refreshed with our Rest, and thy Grace incline us to all our Duty. All this we humbly beg in the Name of Jesus Christ the Righteous, for whom we bless thee, and for all the necessary and useful Instruction we have from him, particularly for his teaching us to Pray. In whose own Words therefore we conclude our present Address, saying,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the Glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

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That

That the CHRIST is Come, Proved and Applied.

Let us Pray.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

1 Tim. 1. 15.

This is a Faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation; That Christ Jesus came into the World to Save Sinners.

WHEN the Great Creator of all Things had made Man a Rational, Just and Holy Being capable to know and chuse his own Actions, and to chuse and do that which is Good; and had placed him in a very Happy Condition; He proposed to his Creature, thus oblig'd, a very Gracious Covenant or Law; which promised him a perpetual Continuance, at least, of all his Excellency and Happiness and the Everlasting Favour of his Maker, upon Condition of his Perfect and Constant Obedience. But that he might not presume upon the Favour which had been shewn him, there was added also,

to secure that his Obedience and Happiness, a Threatning of all manner of Misery against the transgressing of that Law. In this Covenant or Law laid upon the first Man, the Fates of all his Posterity were necessarily included, while they were included within himself; and their Happiness and Misery too, as well as his own, did depend upon his retaining or losing his Innocency: So that if *Adam* would continue Innocent and Obedient till he had a Child, he would then propagate a Righteous and an Holy Seed: But if he should fall into Sin before this, then he must needs Defile himself and his Posterity, and whatever should descend from him must needs be Unholy and Guilty: For how can a Clean Thing come out of an Unclean? Or how should it be possible, when he had polluted the only Fountain and Source of Humane Nature, that the Streams should be any better than polluted too?

And this was a very great Inducement and Motive to have kept him steady to his Duty, and by Consequence an help to it. Yet, for all this, our first Parents had so little Care of themselves, or Concern for their Posterity, that they sinned before they had a Child, in Eating of a Forbidden Fruit; as we are told in the third of *Genesis*. Hereby all Mankind are polluted, and the whole Humane Nature are involved in Guilt as soon as they come into the World; and so all are Obnoxious to the Wrath of God and Eternal Punishment; therefore we are said to be *By Nature Children of Wrath*, Eph. 2. 3. These things the Scripture plainly teaches us, when it says, *By one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned*, Rom. 5. 12. and *By one Mans Disobedience many were made Sinners*, v. 19. and *By the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation*, v. 18.

In this woful and lost Condition of the whole Race of Mankind, no Creature in Heaven or Earth could help us. *It was not possible that the Blood of Bulls or Goats could take away Sins, Heb. 10. 4.* And the whole Race of Mankind being Polluted and Guilty, none of us was a fit Sacrifice to atone for others, nor could the *Fruit of the Body make Propitiation for the Sin of the Soul.* If an Angel had offered to become an Atonement for our Sins, it had not been agreeable to the exact Justice of God, to accept of an Atonement from another sort of Creature than that which had offended: And, if one of the highest Angels would have become Incarnate, and would have taken the Humane Nature into a Personal Union with himself, and so would in that Nature have suffered the Penalty of our Sins, and have died a Sacrifice for them; yet this would have been a Sacrifice below the Offence, and unable to have made a Propitiation; because the Great and Infinite God was the Person wrong'd and affronted, and so Great a Justice must have a Satisfaction in some sort Infinite, or else it would be unworthy of his Acceptance. If any meer Creature, then, should be put to make Satisfaction for the least Sin, by suffering the Penalty due to it, he would never be able to accomplish and finish the work; he must lie for ever doing, and could never have done it, and so must needs die an Eternal Death: And this it could not be just for God to inflict upon such a Creature as should have so much concern for his Glory, and so much Love to his Fellow-Creatures, as to have been willing to suffer so much for them; if it had been possible for any Creature to be willing, and to offer it self to this.

The Second Person in the Glorious Trinity, then, the Son of God, Blessed for Evermore, offered himself to do this mighty work; to take our Nature upon him, and in that Nature to make Atonement by his

his Death for the Sins of Mankind ; to do whatever was necessary to rescue us from our Misery and Perdition, in such a way as might be Honourable to the Eternal and Infinite Justice of God. And he was the only Person that could do this ; the Dignity of his Person would give an Infinite Value to all he should do. He was therefore accepted by the Father, and was appointed to do what was necessary to Save us : And *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not Perish, but have Everlasting Life ;* and now our Help is laid on one that is mighty, and able to Save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, Heb.

7. 25.

It is the Coming of this Great and Kind Person into the World in our Nature, to accomplish our Redemption, which our Church does at this time particularly Commemorate. And this we do, in Conformity to the Pure and Primitive Times of the Church, long before those Corruptions, which may be called Popery, had a Birth. We find several of the Ancient Fathers (*Greg. Nyssen. Basil. Mag. Chrysost.*) to have left Sermons that they preach'd upon this occasion ; which shews that the Primitive Church did very early make a particular Commemoration of our Saviour's Birth. Perhaps the People of all Persuasions among us, are willing to celebrate the Anniversary Remembrance of a particular Deliverance or Favour of God granted to themselves or their Family, and that with Religious Worship as well as with Secular Feasting : And since they can allow themselves to celebrate yearly the Remembrance of a National Deliverance, such as the Discovery of the Gunpowder Treason, and that upon the Commandment of the Magistrate too, or when Imposed, as this is called, we cannot see any reason why they should refuse to observe this Festival also, especially upon the Command of their Governors, which Commemo-

rates so great a Favour as the Coming of the Messiah into the World. May we particularly remember and be Thankful for a Temporal Deliverance, and not a Spiritual one? And does not that Festival rather become Christians, which is celebrated upon an occasion purely Spiritual, than that which has a mixture of worldly Interest in the occasion of it? Is there not the truest Purity of Religion in the former sort of Festivals? and they have no reason for refusing to join with us in this Matter, if they have none but this, That we are not certain which was the Day of our Saviour's Nativity: For if one Day in the Year be devoted to this Pious Purpose, it is no matter which it is; only Peace, and Order, and Obedience, require that we comply with the Church which we live in any such indifferent Matters. Besides, we find the Eastern Churches observing such a Festival as this, even while they remain'd uncertain on what Day to fix it, as appears by their fixing it some on one day and some upon another for a while.

Again, the Eastern Churches, when they knew upon what Grounds (from the Roman Records of *Augustus's* Taxation, mentioned *Luke 2.*) the Roman Church observed this Festival on the day which we observe they were satisfied with it; and we find *St. Chrysostom* to have celebrated it on the same day at *Antioch* above Thirteen hundred Years ago, by a Sermon Preached there on this occasion; wherein he does also highly recommend the Observation of this Festival, as do also several other Holy and Good Men of the Ancients. But thus much shall suffice to be said of this matter.

It is the chief design of this Discourse, and to that I shall now apply my self, to assist and promote a due and profitable Remembrance of our Blessed Saviour's Nativity: For which purpose it shall be directed as much as lies in my Power, and as the

time

time will give leave, to the strengthening of our Faith in him, and to suggest and urge what is due from us to him, upon the account of his Coming into the World. And the Text I have chosen to speak to, is very fit to afford us such Matter of Discourse, *This is a Faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the World to Save Sinners.* These words need no other Explication than what is given them in our Churches Office for the Communion; wherein they are exactly according to the Sense and Meaning of the original words rendered thus, *This is a true Saying, and worthy of all Men to be received, That Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners.* So that they will afford and require these two Heads of Discourse.

1. To shew or prove the Truth of what is here asserted; namely, *That Jesus Christ came into the World to Save Sinners.*

2. To intimate what is the Acceptation or Reception of that Truth which it is worthy to meet with from Men.

In the first place I shall, as briefly as I can, prove the Truth of this Saying: And in it there are these two things to be made good, 1. That the Christ is Come; or that Jesus the Son of Mary, and reputed Son of Joseph is the Christ. 2. That he came into the World to Save Sinners.

1. It is here said, and we shall prove it a Truth, That the Christ is Come, or that Jesus is the Christ: For both those names are here given to the same Person, intimating that Jesus is the Christ. Now to prove this, I shall go no further than only to take notice of the Circumstances of the Birth of Jesus, because we are at the Commemoration of his Birth. And if the Circumstances of the Birth of this Jesus do exactly agree with and fulfil the Prophecies which were before concerning the Circumstances of the Birth of the Messiah, then we have herein good

Ground to believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah or Christ. And that they do agree with those Prophecies concerning the Birth of the Messiah, will appear, if we consider and compare with them, the Time when, the Place where, and the Person and Family of whom Jesus was born.

The Time in which Jesus was Born, appears by the Series of History to have been the time pointed out by the Prophet *Daniel* in the ninth Chapter of his Prophecy, 24, 25, 26, 27. Verses, for the Coming of the Messiah. This the Jews themselves understood, and therefore partly from that Prophecy, and partly from others, and from the Circumstances of that time, they did generally expect the Coming and Appearance of the Messiah, about that very time when Jesus made his publick Appearance in the World: Hence it was that *they doubted of John the Baptist, whether he were the Christ or not*, as is said *Luke 3. 15.* And it is expressly said of them soon after our Saviour began his Publick Ministry, that they generally believed *the Kingdom of God would immediately appear*, *Luke 19. 11.* by which Phrase they meant the days of the Messiah. Yea, they do to this day generally believe that the Messiah is come, and that he did come about that time when Jesus was born; but that he is concealed from them by reason of their Sins, which is all of it doubtless true enough.

Let us now consider the *Place* where the Messiah should be Born: This was plainly foretold by the Prophet *Micah*, that it should be *Bethlehem of Judah*, *Micah 5. 2.* which place of Scripture the Jewish Sanhedrim interpreted to *Herod*, as fortelling the place where the Messiah should be Born, as we are told *Matt. 2. 5.* And at another time they said, *Hadst not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the Seed of David, and out of the Town of Bethlehem where David was?* *John 7. 42.* And here indeed it was that Je-

Jesus was Born at the time of the General Enrolment or Taxation which was commanded by the Emperor *Augustus*, as we learn by *Mat. 2. 1. Luke 2. seven first Verses.*

The next Circumstance of the Messiah's Birth, according to the Prophecies, is, The Family and Person of whom he should be Born, which also is fulfilled in the Birth of Jesus. The Messiah was to be Born of the House and Family of *David*: Hence is he called a *Root of Jesse*, *Isaiah 11. 10.* Of him is that large Promise to *David* to be understood, *Thy Seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy Throne to all Generations*, *Psal. 89. 4.* This the Jews commonly believed; therefore when Jesus enquired of the Pharisees whose Son they expected the Messiah would be, they say to him, *the Son of David*, *Mat. 22. 42.* So in the forementioned, *John 7. 42.* they say, *Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the Seed of David?* Now according to this Prophecy Jesus was born of the Seed and Family of *David*: He took the Name of the Son of *David*, was commonly called by this Name by those that believ'd on him: And his Mother was espoused to a Man of the House of *David*, therefore was she her self of that House, *Luke 1. 27.* For it was a standing Rule, ordinarily observed among the Jews, that Men should always marry one of their own Tribe, and the Family of their Fathers; which we have very distinctly laid down in *Numbers 36. 8.* And it seems a further proof of this, That the Angel who foretold her, she should conceive and bear him called *David* his Father (*Luke 1. 32.*) notwithstanding that she was to conceive him remaining still a Virgin. As therefore St. *Matthew* brings the Pedigree of *Joseph* from *David*, *Luke* in his Genealogy brings that of the Virgin from him (*Lightf. in loc.*) But there is further to be observed of the Person of whom the Messiah was to be born, that she was to be

be a Virgin ; In a miraculous way he was to come into the World, and to be born of a Virgin. Besides other places where this is intimated, it is expressly said in *Isa. 7. 14.* *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Immanuel, or God with us.* Which means, according to the manner of the Hebrew Language, that he should be *Immanuel*, particularly this same Prophet uses that expression several times with this meaning, as we may see *Isa. 1. 26.* *Isa. 60. 14.* *Isa. 62. 4.* According to the Prophecies in this matter, the Ancient Rabbins of the Jews taught, that the Messiah should be born of a Virgin. (*Lichtf. in Luc. 1. 35.*) And thus was Jesus truly born. His Mother was a Virgin when she was espoused to *Joseph*, as appears *Luk. 1. 27.* She was a Virgin when she Conceived him, as is intimated *Mat. 1. 18.* and she was still a Virgin when she had brought him forth, as 25th Verse of that Chapter teaches us.

And thus is the first part of this Saying sufficiently proved ; which is, That the Messiah is Come; or that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ.

2. The other part of it, which is also to be proved, is, That He came into the World to save Sinners; That this was the Business and End of the Coming of the Messiah ; and that accordingly Jesus came into the World for that End. This is the other part of the Saying in the Text ; and this is directly contrary to that which was the Common, Corrupt and Mistaken Opinion of the Jewish Nation concerning the Messiah at the time of his coming : For it was then their Common Opinion, That they needed no other Redemption from the Messiah, and were to have no other, but only that he should gather them together from their dispersion among the Heathens : That he should raise them to a great Degree of Temporal Glory and Power ; should make them the chief People of the World, and bring all others in-

to Subjection to them. And because they saw that Jesus went about no such things, they after a while Rejected and Murthered him, for pretending to be what he really was. To prove this Truth in the Text, then, it must be shewn, that the Messiah was to be such a Saviour as the Text speaks, and that Jesus is such an one.

That the Messiah was to come into the World to save Sinners, as such, that is, to save them from their Sins, is the constant Doctrine of the Prophets concerning him. He was to deliver Men from the Guilt of their Sins, and their Obligation to Punishment thereby; and also from the Pollution and Power of Sin upon their Nature. And thus much is plainly said in that Prophecy concerning him, which we have in the ninth Chapter of *Daniel*: It is there said in the 24th Verse, *He should make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and he should bring in Everlasting Righteousness*: And in the 26th Verse, *That the Messiah should be cut off, but not for Himself*. How plain does this foretel the Sacrifice of his Death, and the Atonement which he should therein make for Sins that were none of his own? That he should communicate to them that believe on him an Everlasting Righteousness; which is to Save them effectually and fully from the Power and Pollution of their Sins. I shall not need to mention any other Prophecy to this purpose, but only 53d Chapter of *Isaiah*, where these things are fully and exprelly spoken of the Messiah, as what he had done, because he would most assuredly do them. 'Tis there said, *He was Wounded for our Transgressions, he was Bruised for our Iniquities*: Intimating his making himself, in his Sufferings, a Sacrifice and Propitiation for Sin. 'Tis said, *The Chastisements of our Peace were upon him, and by his Stripes we are Healed*: He was to Purchase for us, by his Death and Sufferings, a Delivery from all the Misery and Pollution, or Sickness of
our

our Souls which we derive from our Sin and Guilt.

Now as these things were Prophefied of the Messiah, so they are ascribed to Jesus : The Angel *Gabriel*, that brought the Virgin the News of her Conceiving him, said, his Name should be Jesus for this reason, *Because he should save his People from their Sins* ; As we see *Mat. 1. 21.* Of Jesus did *Philip* interpret that 53d Chapter of *Isaiah*, as fulfilled in him to the Eunuch mentioned in *Acts. 8.* Upon which the *Eunuch* believed, and confessed that *Jesus was Christ and the Son of God*, in the 37th Verse. 'Tis said, *He came to destroy the Works of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 8. To Cleanse and Sanctifie our Nature which that wicked one had polluted. *That he gave himself for us, that he might Redeem us from all Iniquity*, or the Guilt of our Iniquities, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People Zealous of Good Works, *Titus 2. 14.* These things do sufficiently make it appear, that 'tis the Doctrine of Holy Scripture, and therefore true, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners ; and by these things we may very justly be well strengthened and confirmed in the belief of this Truth. So much then shall suffice to be spoken to the first part of this Discourse.

I now proceed to the second ; in which it was proposed, to shew what Acceptation or Reception this Truth is worthy of, and does require from Men : Which I shall briefly represent in the following particulars.

1. It ought to be received with the greatest and most Heartly Thankfulness and Praise for so great a Favour : Whenever we think of this it should excite our devout Admiration and Praise : Well may that do so which has in it the most unfathomable Depths of Miracle and of Love : Indeed the least instance of Love in him, to such as we were become, had been Miracle all over, much more is this so. It should stir up all that is within us to Glorifie and Praise

Praise God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for our glorious Redemption; and when we have done all we can, we must say this Instance of Divine Mercy is exalted above all Blessing and Praise. Certainly the greatest Thankfulness we can render is due for this, That the Great God whom we had offended, should concern himself still to do us Kindnesses! That he should take care to save those who had very guiltily destroyed themselves, had thrown away the Happiness he gave them, and despised all the Mighty Benefits which he had bestowed upon them! That the offended Justice of God would accept of an Atonement for our Sins! And yet there is more Wonder in our Redemption; for he found out, he appointed the way of that Atonement which was made! And yet there is more Wonder; For God himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, made the Atonement! And for this it was, that he took upon him the Humane Nature, that he was born of a Woman, made under the Law, and took upon him the Form of a Servant: He came to Die for our Sins, and to give us Life by his Precious and Meritorious Death! Behold here the Love of a God! How Divine! How Supreme! How exceeding all other Love!

Let each Heart, then, filled with Joy and Wonder, pour out its Thankful Praises, and say, *Glory to God on High, for Peace on Earth, and Good Will towards Men: Let all the numerous Hosts of Mighty Angels Praise him: Let all his Works in all places of his Dominions Praise him: Let every thing that hath Breath Praise the Lord: Praise the Lord, O my Soul; This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoyce therein.* We should spend much time (when we Celebrate this Venerable Festival especially) in Meditations on this great Instance of Divine Love, to affect our Hearts with it, to excite our Praise for it, and to dispose our selves to make such returns of Thankfulness as may be in some measure suitable to it.

2. The Truth of this Saying in the Text; That *Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners*, does most absolutely and indispensibly require of all that hear it, That they do earnestly desire and seek the Salvation which he came to bestow. There is also too much necessity to urge this: The Salvation which he came to bestow, is generally neglected and slighted among Men. He came, indeed, partly to restore us to a right to the good things of this World, and to a Blessed and Comfortable Enjoyment of them; and this is acceptable to us, this our Carnal Minds can greedily seek and desire, and this we could afford to thank him for: Like the Wretch'd Jews, we are all for a Temporal Deliverer: We could value a Saviour that would make us Great and Rich in this World. But this is the least part of his Salvation, and of no compare with the rest: He came to Save his People from their Sins; to deliver us from the Practice of Sin, as well as from the Guilt of it; to deliver us from Eternal Miseries, rather than from Temporal Afflictions; to bestow upon us Eternal Riches and Pleasures, even the Felicities of Heaven, rather than an abundance of this Worlds Goods. And these are the things we should chiefly covet and desire: We should *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, and long for an assured Interest in the Kingdom of Heaven: These are the things that cost him so Dear; so small a matter as a Temporal Worldly Felicity might have been much more easily and cheaply purchased. If we do not seek these Spiritual and Eternal Benefits, we slight and despise them; and then we do most ungratefully despise the Love that has done so much to obtain them for us. If we are more concerned to rule the World than to govern our selves; to bring all things to our own Humour, than to subdue our own Will and deny our selves: If we are more concerned to conquer outward and Temporal Enemies, than Inward and Spiritual ones,

and

and to bring the Church to a worldly Prosperity, than to attain the future Celestial Happiness reserved for the Saints: We have, then, like the Jews, another sort of Salvation in our Designs and Hopes, than that which Christ Jesus came to bestow, and which cost him so Dear, and we neglect and despise his Salvation. This is, then, a course of Practice quite contrary to a due and meet Reception of this Truth. We may perhaps in such a way think our selves possessed with a mighty Zeal for Jesus Christ, and for his Kingdom and Interest, but alas this is only a Blind, and Carnal, and a Selfish Zeal for our own worldly Interest and Tranquility.

3. Lastly, This Truth requires of us, that we accept of Jesus as he is offered to us in the Gospel, that is, That we receive him as Christ; and in this way we must expect and desire to be partakers of his Salvation. We must seek and embrace it upon his own Terms, or else we do not rightly value nor desire it. Now the better to represent this, I must mention and insist a little upon the Particulars it contains. We must know, then, that the Name Christ, is the Name of his Office as our Mediator, that it signifies the Anointed One; that He is the Eminently Anointed One, and possesses the Gifts, and is endowed with the Offices to which Men were wont to be designed and set apart, by Anointing according to God's appointment and direction. He is then to be looked upon as Prophet, Priest, and King, and as such we ought to receive and submit to him. Let us see what each of these does include.

As a Prophet, He has published the Will of God to Mankind; Has given us Rules of Life and Immortality, the Divine Instructions which are able to make Men wise unto Salvation; and happy is the Man that learns and observes them. Now to receive and submit to him as a Prophet and Teacher comes from God, we must regard and learn his Instructions,

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we must lay them up in our Minds, and resolve to adhere to them in our Practice ; so we must become his Disciples. When he says, *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit ; Blessed are the Meek ; Blessed are the Peaceable ; Blessed are the Pure in Heart ;* we must believe that Piety and Vertue are the Paths of true Happiness : That a Man may be more Happy in a great measure of these, than in a great Abundance of Worldly Goods. When he says ; *What shall it profit a Man to gain the whole World and lose his Soul :* We must believe, that to do thus, were to make a very foolish Bargain. When he says, *Blessed are they that suffer Persecution for Righteousness sake ;* we must believe, it shall be better and happier for us to bear our wrongful Sufferings patiently, and commit our Cause to God, than to Rebel against his Providence and his Laws, and be guilty in resisting and opposing them. Thus are we to receive him as a Prophet, even by receiving his Divine Instructions, and following them, however contrary they may seem to our present Interests, or to our dearest Inclinations, or to the most common and received Maxims and Practices of a wicked World.

As a Priest, The Blessed Jesus offered Sacrifice, and made Atonement for the Sins of Men : He was himself in his Pure and Spotless Humane Nature, the accepted Sacrifice for our Sins, by his voluntary Death upon the Cross for us. And having thus made Satisfaction for our Sins *by the Blood of his Cross,* as the Scripture speaks, He is ascended into Heaven, as into the Holy of Holies, there to make continual Intercession for us ; and from thence to pour down Spiritual Gifts and Blessings upon us. We must, then, own him as our Great High Priest ; Believe and rely upon the Sufficiency of his Sacrifice ; and seek and expect all necessary Favour and Mercy from God upon his Account. We must acknowledge our selves Unworthy to receive any good thing from God,

God, and therefore ask all in his Name: We must acknowledge our selves unworthy to present any Service that may be acceptable upon its own account, and therefore must present and offer all in his Name, as the Scripture directs, *Coloss. 3. 17.* relying upon his Merits and Intercession alone for our Acceptance and Reward.

As a King, The Lord Jesus has given us Laws; He has established and re-inforced the Moral Law of the Ten Commandments to be the Rule of our Thoughts, Words and Actions: He has appointed Officers and Governors in his Church: He conquers and Subdues his Enemies, that is, the Enemies of our Salvation, the Devil and those Wicked Lusts which reign in the Hearts of Men, and War against their Souls: and as a King, He will hereafter, at the Last Day, Judge the World in Righteousness, and give to every Man according to his Works. To receive him, then, as Christ, being to receive him as King: This requires further of us, that we set our selves to study, and learn, and obey his Laws: That we renounce the Devil and all his Works: That we fight against those Lusts and Wickednesses in our selves, which He came to destroy. We must resolve and endeavour a Constant, Universal and Sincere Obedience to his Commands. We must Dread and Expect, Prepare for and so Desire his Coming at the Last Day, to Judge the World. And let this be also well considered, That the submitting to Him as King, requires that we do also submit our selves to his Governors in the Church, and obey their Laws; For their Laws are his Laws, when they are founded upon the General Rules which he has given them to Rule his Church by, and when they are not contrary to any of his Express Laws. It is Rebellion against his Kingly Office, to refuse to obey them in things Lawful, as it is an Opposition and Affront to the Supreme Magistrate in a State, to resist and

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oppose a subordinate one when he Acts in his Office, and exercises the Authority committed to him by the Supreme Magistrate. He himself has plainly taught us these things, in saying to those whom he had appointed to teach and govern his Church, *He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me*, Luke 10. 16. Whoever does despise and oppose him that is sent, he does also despise and oppose him that sends him.

To Conclude: That we may perswade our selves to receive Jesus as Christ, and as a King over us.

Let us consider, How great Love he has shewn to us; and from thence, as we may justly, conclude there can be nothing Harsh or Unreasonable in all his Commands: He that came to Save, cannot give such Commands as would Hurt and Destroy. His Commandments are not Grievous. Let us Love him, then, and keep his Commandments, who loved us and gave them.

Let us consider too, That he will be a Prince when he is a Saviour: That 'tis the required Condition of his being the Author of Salvation to us, that we Obey him. He will not, then, be a Priest, or intercede for those who will not receive him as a King.

Lastly, Let us consider, That he will Punish as well as Save; He will come again in Glory to Judge both the Quick and the Dead, and will then reward every Man according to his Works: And as he will say to those that have sincerely obeyed him, *Well do ye Good and Faithful Servants, Enter ye into your Masters Joy*: So he will say of them that would not submit and obey, *As for those mine Enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them forth and slay them before me*. He came the first time into the World to Save Sinners, and will come a second time to condemn them. And they that are not duly affected with the Love and Kindness of his first Coming, as to value the Favours he came to bestow, and

seek them and comply with his Terms of Salvation, and give up themselves to him who has given himself for us, these must needs expect to find a great deal of terrible Wrath against them when he comes again, *And these shall then go away into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal.*

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, One God, Blessed for evermore, be all Honour and Glory World without End.

The P R A Y E R.

O Eternal, Infinite, and Incomprehensible God; Thou art worthy of all Reverence and Fear, of all Adoration and Praise. Thy Greatness is unsearchable and awful, and thy Goodness is a Depth which no Humane Wit can fathom, which no Praises of Men or Angels can reach. How gloriously hast thou shewn this in the Creatures which thou hast made, whom thou madest to exercise thy great Goodness upon them! But Oh how much more does it shine in thy Favour towards Sinners, in that thou doest good to the Unthankful and the Evil, thou continuest kind to those that have abused thy Goodness and Favour! And especially is it wonderful, O Lord, in thy Gracious Concern to Save us, in that Jesus Christ came into the World to Save Sinners! The Son of God took our Nature upon him, and was, as at this time, born of a Virgin, that by a Holy and Blameless Life on Earth, he might set us an encouraging Example of Holiness; that he might purchase for us, who are not capable of any such Merit, the Happy Rewards of Righteousness; and that he might, by dying an Innocent Death, die a Sacrifice for our Sins, as a Lamb without Spot, so to procure Mercy, and Pardon, and Salvation, for us Miserable Unworthy Creatures. Oh that we could be deeply sensible of Redeeming Love! Give us, O Lord, such a due Sense of all thy Mercies, that our Hearts may be unfeignedly Thankful, and that we may shew forth thy Praise, not only with our Lips, but in our Lives. Make us, therefore, to give up our selves to thy Service, to set our selves to live

to thee, to Please and to Honour thee, by walking before thee in Righteousness and Holiness all the Days of our Lives. Oh Lord let the Remembrance of thy Love be quick and lively in us; Let it always be very Powerful and Strong; Let it kindle in our Hearts an Ardent Love of thee. Let such a Flame, we pray thee, be at this Season either kindled or greatly increased. Let Love to thee cleanse and refine us from all our Dross of Carnality and Inordinate Love of the World and Sensible Objects. Let us, from what Our Saviour has done for us, account nothing too much that we can do for him. And since we ought to desire and seek the Blessings that he came to purchase for us, Behold, O Lord, we do desire them: At this time we earnestly Pray for the Pardon of all our Sins, for the Grace of true Repentance: We Pray that we being Regenerate, and made thy Children by Adoption and Grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit. Lord increase and strengthen our Faith in him, as able and willing to Save us; bring us into a willing Subjection to him as a King to Rule us: Open our Hearts to receive his Wise and Heavenly Doctrines, that we may regard him as a Prophet and Master to teach us. So make us ready to receive him, as he is offered to us in the Gospel, that by him we may at last obtain the final and compleat Salvation of our Souls.

And we Pray that this Faithful and True Saying, which is worthy of all Acceptation, may be known and be accepted in all the World. That the People may Praise thee O God, that all the People may Praise thee, and be Blessed in partaking of thy Salvation. Grant thy Church an abundance of Grace and Peace. In particular we recommend to thy Mercies, that part of it in which we dwell. O Lord Pardon our manifold Transgressions, especially our too great Contempt of the Sound of thy Gospel, and that it has had no more Force, no better Acceptation among us. O Lord deal not with us after our Sins, neither reward us according to our Iniquities. But according to that Infinite Mercy which gave thy Son to redeem Mankind, give us Repentance for our Sins, a full Pardon of them, and deliver us from all the Evils which we most righteously have deserved. Continue to us our Wise, Just, and Gracious Governours: Bless their Persons, and prosper all their Undertakings for thy Glory and our Welfare. Lord grant, we pray thee, that the Word which we have heard this

may have some power towards the cleansing us from all remainders of Evil, and the Advancing us in true Piety and Vertue. Make us Peaceable and Obedient in our several Places to our several Superiors, and always to live to thy Glory. We humbly commit our selves to thy good Providence this Night: We pray thee keep us in Safety, and make the Our-goings of the next Morning to Praise thee. Hear us for thy Son Jesus Christ's sake, in his Words, saying,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily-bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

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The Love of God the Father to Mankind, Illustrated and Applied.

Let us Pray.

PRESENT us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

John III. 16.

For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not Perish but have Everlasting Life.

THE Holy Scriptures do abundantly testify that there is but one God: But they also speak of this God under the Names of Father, Son and Holy Ghost: And to each of these distinctly and severally do they ascribe the highest Titles of God, and the most incommunicable Properties of the Divine Nature: And these Three are spoken of in the Holy Scriptures, with as much distinction from one another, as we are wont to speak of three Persons. From hence the Scriptures constrain us to believe that there are Three Persons in the One God, or three personal

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Differences in the same Divine Nature. Now tho' this be a Myſtery which our Reason cannot comprehend, yet it is very reasonable to believe it, when God himſelf has taught it us in the Book of his Revelations. And tho' we muſt herein believe that of God, which we cannot find to be agreeable to any other ſort of Being, yet methinks it ſhould be no difficulty to perſwade ourſelves to do ſo. For as there is but one God, there is not any other ſuch a Being as he beſides himſelf; and then we may very rationally and juſtly aſcribe to him ſuch a ſort of Exiſtence and Being as cannot belong to any thing elſe. And if I muſt believe any thing to be Peculiar and Singular in the One Onely God, I know not why I may not as well believe this as any thing elſe.

Thus I have laid a Foundation for the right Underſtanding of our preſent Text. Theſe words are ſpoken of the firſt Perſon in this Glorious Trinity, who is God the Father, They are deſign'd to repreſent and magnifie his ineffimable Love, in appointing and allowing the Redemption of the VVorld by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. I ſhall not need either for Explication or Improvement of this Text, to inſiſt upon a long Account of the Occaſion or Connexion of it. And it ſhould be no wonder, if, when the Great and Glorious Subject of theſe words is deſigned to be the ſubject of our Meditations, we ſhould fall even abruptly into it, and not be able to detain our Thoughts in Preface and Preparatory Diſcourſe.

God ſo loved the World: God the Father, Creator of all things ſufficient to himſelf, and Debtor to none of his Creatures. *He ſo loved:* So, beyond Compariſon or Expreſſion; this Inſtance of his Love has no Parallel; no Compariſon can be made of it; but what would diminith and diſparage it; neither can the Tongues of any Creatures ſufficiently extol, or their largeſt Thoughts Comprehend it. *He ſo loved the World:*

World: Our Lord opposes this to the common Mistake of the Jews, which 'tis not unlikely *Nicodemus*, to whom he spake these words, might be possessed with; which was, that the Nations of the *V*World should not only not be Redeemed by the *Messias*, but should moreover be subdued and destroyed. He therefore intimates, that the Son is given for all, and that whosoever they be, whether Jews or Gentiles, that shall believe in him they shall not Perish, but shall have Everlasting Life.

Now to enter, as far as our weak Minds can go, into the Love of God the Father as expressed in what is here said of it, and as far as the time will give leave: Let us consider particularly these four things concerning it, which are proposed to our Consideration in the Text.

1. The Person who is said to have Loved.
2. *V*Who they are that are so Loved, as the Text speaks.
3. The Gift or Exercise of that his Love to them.
4. The Term or Condition of their partaking in that Gift, and the Blessed Benefits of it: For in this also there is Evidence of very great Love.

Let us begin with the first of these. To consider the Person who is here said to Love, that is, *God the Father*: Him we must consider as an Infinite Eternal Being; as having in himself all Excellency and perfection, and Infinitely exalted above all other things besides himself, and therefore that 'tis Condescension in him to Love or take Care for any thing else. There can be no Object worthy of his Love, or Regard, but only his own Great and Glorious Self.

Again, *V*We may consider him sufficient to himself, one who is his own Happiness, who needs not any

VOL. II. *The Love of God the Father.* 185

any other Being to contribute any thing to his Felicity, because he has all that he can desire in himself. So that he loves other Beings, not to do himself any Good by Loving them, but to do them Good, not for his own Advantage but for theirs. And since he is the Creator of all things, and it is he who has given them whatever they have and are; it is not possible that they should return any Gain or Advantage to him; and he Loves Beings that are altogether Unprofitable as well as Unnecessary to him. Thus is his Love altogether Voluntary and Free, even in this great Expression of it; and this also greatly adds to it. Therefore the Apostle insists upon this Consideration to Illustrate it, *1 John 3. Herein is Love* says he; *not that we loved God*; that is, Not that we had obliged or could oblige him by any Love or Benefits, *But that he Loved us*: And in the 19th Verse he says, *He first Loved us*. Of his own Motion is all his Love to us, and all the Exercises of it; it is as Free as it is Condescending. Whatever is here expressed he has done it, because he would do it, because he delights in doing Good. What he has done, is that which we did not deserve, yea, which we did not think of, or so much as ask for; as there was indeed a great deal of Reason why such a thing as that should never enter into our Thoughts, and why we should never be able to expect such an Exercise of Divine Love towards us, as will more appear in the following Considerations.

In the second place, Let us consider *who the Persons are that are here said to be Loved*. These are design'd under the Name of the World, which means the whole Race of Mankind, which are Polluted and Guilty, and so Obnoxious to Divine Wrath and Eternal Punishment. And here we should consider that some of the Angels fell into Sin as well as Men; that all of them were left to suffer the Punishment due
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to their Sins without any Remedy or Relief: The Goodness of God gave way to the Execution of just and deserved Wrath and Vengeance upon them, but concerned and engaged him to save us from our Lost Condition. The Redeemer took not on him the Nature of Angels, but of Men; for us Men, and for our Salvation only, did he come down from Heaven. Thus did those Noble Creatures, more excellent in their Nature than we, Perish without any help, while a Mighty Saviour was allowed and provided for us.

Let us further consider what Mankind were, in the condition which needed this Instance of the Father's Love. Very Miserable indeed we were, and utterly Lost, there was no Help for us in our selves; But besides this, we were extremely Guilty, and our Destruction was wholly of our selves. Let us enquire how ill we had deserved of God, when this Instance of his Favour was afforded us. To apprehend which, we must consider and know, that God had newly raised Man from the common Dust, had built the World for his Habitation, and abundantly furnished it with all things necessary to his Comfort and Happiness: God had honour'd him highly, in making him Lord of all this lower Creation: Man had his intire Being, all his noble Faculties, all his pleasant Enjoyments from the Creator's Bounty. Thus was he oblig'd, thus was he favour'd; yet he was unsensible of all this, it could not retain him in the Love and Esteem of his Creator, but upon a slight Temptation, and without any real Provocation or Necessity, he turned Enemy and Rebel against him. St. *Austin* says, That first Sin was so much the Greater, in as much as it does contain in it all manner of Sin, (*Enchiridion*, Cap. 45.) It was, says he, an Impudent Attempt upon the Majesty of God; for as much as in the Commission of it, Man thought to make himself

a God and to become equal to him who had no Equal. It was Infidelity and Treason in a high degree; for as much as Man being, in the Temptation, set as it were between God and the Devil, he believed the Devil rather than God, and took part with the Apostate Spirit, in shaking off the Yoke of due Obedience. It was also a vile Profanation of a Sacred thing, and an Impious Sacrilege; as Man violated in himself, thereby, that Angelical Purity which rendred his Soul the Temple of God. It was a Murder and the greatest of Murders; for as much as the first Man slew therein not only himself, but also an innumerable Multitude of Men besides, even all Mankind that were to descend from him. It was a Theft and Robbery, in that Man stole as it were himself from God, like a Slave that runs away from his Master. It was also a very guilty Covetousness; Man desir'd that which was not his, which he had no Right to; It belonged and was reserved to the great Owner and Lord of all things: And certainly it was the more guilty, because that Lord had given him so much besides, and but in this single Instance of Abstinence, required from him a Testimony of his Gratitude and Submission. Thus does that great Man justly aggravate that Sin; and he concludes at last 'tis an unspeakable Sin; 'tis so vast a depth of Wickedness, as no words can fully fathom or express. And yet it may be added further, that this Sin was a Scource and Fountain to a great deal more: It polluted the Humane Nature, and so occasion'd the innumerable Transgressions of Men throughout all Ages. And all the Wickedness which this plentiful Fountain would produce, God's Infinite Wisdom and Omniscience forsook; yet for all this he Loved the Guilty Rebellious Creatures; under such a vast Provocation he exercised Goodness and Compassion towards us: Thus was he amazingly Good to the Unthankful and the Evil. And the

Apostle

188 *The Love of God the Father.* VOL. II.

Apostle to this matter says, *Herein God commendeth his Love to us, in that while we were Sinners, Christ was appointed and design'd to die for us, Rom. 5. 8.* which is as much as to say, this thing greatly magnifies the Love of God to Mankind, that so great Favour was shewn to those who deserved so ill.

In the third place let us, to apprehend and illustrate the Immense Love of God to Mankind, consider the Exercise of his Love, in the Gift which he gave to these ill-deserving Rebels. What it was that he is here said to have Given. If it had been any one but the Great God that had been thus provok'd, if he had not utterly refused ever to shew any more Kindness to such as had provoked him, yet some very small instance of Kindness should have served their turn; and any one besides him would have made it appear, either in the unwilling backwardness and slowness of the Gift, or in the contemptible Littleness and Worthlessness of it, that he had retain'd a very deep Resentment of the Injury and Affront. Thus would an offended man be apt to deal with his Fellow creature that had offended him. But God, who is Love it self, as the Apostle speaks, who is indeed Infinite Love, no sooner saw us Miserable, but he concern'd himself to help us; no sooner were we Lost, but he provided us a Saviour. And it was no mean or inconsiderable Benefit which his Love then afforded us, but such as did perfectly reach our Necessity, and such as exceeds our Comprehension and Praise. To make our selves the more sensible what the Gift of God to us was, in this our Guilty and Miserable Condition, we must particularly consider the Person that is given: In what Sense he is given; and to what Purpose or Effect, what are the Benefits and Advantages which are procured for us by him.

1. *The Person Given*, is here said to be the *Only Begotten Son* of God: To understand which Expression, we must know, that by an unspeakable Generation, full of Mystery and Wonder, God the Father does derive and communicate the Divine Essence and Nature to the Second Person in the Trinity, from all Eternity to all Eternity: And he who has this derived and communicated Nature is God the Son. The Father is Originally God, as not having received his Eternal Being from any other: The Son is God of God, as having received his Godhead, or as being God by a Communication of the Divine Nature from the Father. This the Scripture speaks very plainly, *John 5. 26. As the Father hath Life in himself, an Independent Life, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself:* As the Father is the True and Living God, so hath he given to the Son to be the True and Living God. Again, he that is the Son speaks thus of himself, *I know him*, that is, the Father, *for I am from him*, *John 7. 29.* And he is the *Only begotten Son* of God as our Text speaks, because the Father did never communicate thus the Divine Essence to any besides him. But this Person, then, who was given for us, is in his Nature equal to the Father in all the Excellency and Glory of the Deity; therefore he is said to be the *Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person*, *Heb. 1. 3.* This is the Glorious Gift mentioned in the Text! Even God was given for us Creatures! He that is very God of very God! The Son in whom the Father is well pleased is given for those Creatures, with whom he was most justly displeased! His Beloved Son for those he had just reason Eternally to Hate!

2. Let us now further observe, *In what Sense he was given*; for this also is very considerable to this Purpose: Let us enquire what the Scripture means when it says, *He gave his only begotten Son.* Of this it speaks very strange and amazing, as well as the

the most obliging things. The Sum of what it says to this matter is this, That as the Son offer'd himself to be our Mediator, so the Father allow'd and permitted him to be so; and the Father appointed the way of his Redeeming us. He gave or appointed him to undergo the great Condescension and Abasement of taking our Nature upon him, that so what was done by him, might with Equity be imputed to us, to our Relief and Advantage, and we might be Saved in the same way that we were Lost; by the Righteousness and Merits of one, in our Nature, Covenanting with God for us, and performing fully the Conditions on his part of that Covenant, and by the Communication of an Holy and Renewed Nature from him to us. So the Son, who is God, became Man, *The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us*: He was made under the Law, to satisfy all the Demands of it in our Nature, which had broken and affronted it; and he did this for our Advantage. He lived a Life of perfect and spotless Innocency, performed a perfect Obedience to the Law of God, and so merited on our behalf Everlasting Life, the Eternal Glorious Reward of perfect Obedience. But moreover because Man had sinned, and was by his Guilt bound over to suffer the threatned Penalty of his despised Law; therefore the Father appointed the Son to suffer Death for us, which was the Penalty threatned. Hence the Scripture says, *God laid on him the Iniquities of us all*, Isa. 53. and *He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was laid upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed*. 'Tis said, *He was made a Curse for us*, and that he was in his Death a Sacrifice and Propitiation for our Sins. All this he was by the Appointment of the Father, as well as by his own voluntary Choice: And thus the Father has well appear'd, indeed, to Love Mankind; to account nothing too Dear or too Good to be given to our Benefit

VOL. II. *The Love of God the Father.* 191

fit and Advantage, when our Necessity does require it. Upon these accounts it is fitly said, that God gave us, in giving his Son, his Person, his Merits, his Sufferings, his Death, his Glory, since all these are appointed to be to our Relief and Advantage.

3. And now we may easily see *the Advantages and Benefits which are procured to us by this Gift, and are included in it*: They have been intimated already, and the Text expresses them, in saying, God gave his Son, *that whosoever believes on him should not Perish, but have Everlasting Life*: We may have by him Deliverance from Eternal Wrath and Misery, and Advancement to Everlasting Glory and Happiness. Thus does this mighty Gift in all respects declare an Infinite and Godlike Love in the Giver. As it was God that gave, he surely gave like himself, when God the Son was the Gift, and when the Purpose and Effect for which he was given, is such a mighty Deliverance, and such an Advancement; when we are delivered from the Eternal Wrath of God to his Eternal Love; from having him our Enemy, to the having an Interest in him; from the miserable want of all comfortable Communications from him, to the satisfying Enjoyment of himself. Now when all this must be reckoned into the Gift, how Glorious and Wonderful does it proclaim the Love of God to be! This is the third thing proposed to be taken notice of in the Text, to illustrate and shew us the great Love of God the Father to Mankind: And there remains yet another particular worth our observing to this purpose.

In the Fourth place we must consider, *the Ease and Gentle Terms and Conditions, on which he has determined to make us Partakers of this Divine unmeasurable Gift*. This matter is expressed in these words, *Whosoever believeth in Him*: Such are they who *shall not Perish, but have Everlasting Life*. Faith in Jesus Christ is the gentle and reasonable Condition of our Interest

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in him as a Mediator and Redeemer. The Great God who might have been utterly irreconcilable to us, will be reconciled if we believe in his Son. If we believe the Sufficiency and Acceptance of his Sacrifice for the Sins of Men; if we believe the Merits of his Holy and Innocent Life; and if we rely upon him for our Salvation, as being Mighty to Save. But then our Faith must make us humbly apply ourselves to him for Salvation, we must indeed seek and desire the Salvation he has purchased, which very few do that yet think they do it: The most of Men, to whom the Gospel is preached, do indeed slight the Salvation which it offers; they Love and desire the good things of this World, more than the Happiness of Heaven, and will venture upon Eternal Misery and Perdition, rather than not obtain or enjoy those things according to their Desire. But our Faith must make us chiefly desire that Salvation, and value above all things the Delivery from Hell, and a Right and Title to Everlasting Blessedness. And as it must seek these things of Jesus, the Christ and Son of God, and rely upon him as sufficiently able to bestow them; so it must devote and resign us to his Service and Conduct, it must be our purpose and constant Endeavour to live to him who died for us; and we must be Saved by him in his own way. He must Save us by ruling over us, by loosing the Bonds of Iniquity, and bringing us into the Happy Freedom of his Service. And now how Reasonable and Easy is all this? He demands nothing herein, but what is very Just. And his Demands condescend to the Weakness of our present Fallen State. If we do sincerely devote ourselves to serve and obey Jesus Christ, and to keep his Commands, this shall be accepted; and the Merits of a perfect Righteousness shall be bestowed upon us, though we have not such an one of our own, for the sake of his perfect Righteousness: Our unwilling Failings, and unavoidable

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VOL. II. *The Love of God the Father.* 193

Imperfections in our Duty, shall not Condemn us: Yea, which is more, All the wilful and provoking Sins, committed in the time of our Rebellion, shall be forgiven and not remembered against us, upon our Repentance and Conversion to a Good Life. Thus surely is our Pardon very easie to us, and attainable upon a very gentle Condition. And certainly we, cannot pretend that there is any Merit or Obligation in our Faith, whereby to obtain so great Favour: It is plainly nothing but the Infinite Goodness and Love of God, which makes it so Profitable to us. If by this we do attain Eternal Life, we must nevertheless confess and say, 'tis the Gift of God through Jesus Christ. It must be said, that by Grace we are Saved, when 'tis through our Faith that we are so. We are Saved without Money, and without Price on our parts. O Bounteous and Wonderful Love! How well may it be said, God so Loved the World, as to give his Son for them, without adding any Attempt to compare or expresse so matchless, so unspeakable a Love!

Let us dwell upon these things a while, and we cannot chuse but wonder at them! That he who was greatly Offended and Infinitely above those that had offended him, should be concerned to do them Kindness! that he should Love those that Hated him, Value those that Despised and Affronted him, and contrive and appoint the means of delivering them from Death and Misery, who had deserved to receive these from his Just Vengeance, is a mighty Wonder! And yet it adds to it further, That he should part with so great, so Dear, and so valuable a Person, as the only Begotten Son of God, to undertake their Deliverance: That he should Abandon and Appoint him to so much Abasement, to Suffer, to Die, for such as we! And then that he should permit us to be Partakers of Everlasting Joy and Felicity, upon so cheap and easie a Condition on our part, and give us

an Interest in the Merits and Satisfaction of the Redeemer, without any Merit of our own, compleats the Benefit and Favour, and magnifies his Love to a vast and incomprehensible Extent: It is a Bright and Glorious Love, very pleasant to consider, but has so great a Lustre, as will Dazle and Confound us too, if with too bold and rash an Eye we gaze upon it. Humble Admiration and Praise it abundantly requires of us.

And now I come to Apply what has been said, in urging a due Use and Improvement of it: For certainly such things as these ought never to be set before Men, without having some Influence and Effect upon them: What they ought to have on us, I shall briefly suggest in the following Particulars.

I. What has been said, should awaken and excite Careless Sinners to a Serious and Speedy Concern for their Salvation. Is the Great God so much concerned to Save us, and should we have no Care, no Desire to be Saved? Is our Salvation purchased at a costly Rate, and should Mankind have little Esteem of it, and account it a thing Unnecessary? It is offered upon reasonable and easie Terms, and should we refuse it? We refuse that great Salvation when we do not submit to the Terms of it: We Despise it when we do not seek it, and then we Despise, we Affront the Infinite Love of God in what he has done to Save us. But Oh how great an Addition is this to our Guilt! How unworthy a requital is it of the greatest Love! What a Madness to refuse and despise Salvation! What can be the Fate of such Men but to Perish! As the Apostle justly says, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation!* Heb. 2. 3. And then, as they must needs Perish, Let us consider too, how their Misery will be aggravated and heightened by these things as their Guilt now is. Will it not be a most terrible and tormenting Thought, to reflect, that the time was, when Hea-

VOL. II. *The Love of God the Father.* 195

ven and all its Eternal Joy and Felicity was offered them upon easie and reasonable Terms, but they slighted and refused it! God proved himself desirous of their happiness, and they despised his Love! It must needs wound the condemned Wretches, to think they have chosen their own Misery, they have undone themselves even against the Will of God, and in opposition to his Endeavour (as we may say) to have saved them. To avoid then this unspeakable Misery, which they must otherwise fall into, and these terrible Lashes of their own enraged Minds; Let all those who have hitherto neglected their Salvation, now and from henceforth apply themselves to seek and secure it. Let them take it while it is offered; seek it while it may be found; and make no delay to *work out their own Salvation*, because the time of Life, and the precious day of Grace, is of very uncertain continuance; and if they do not secure their Salvation speedily, it may be lost for ever.

2. The things which have been said of the Love of God to Mankind, may serve to Encourage and Animate the weak and staggering Faith of true Penitents. Sometimes with a Sense of our Sins, we are apt to entertain some Doubts and Fears of our obtaining Mercy and Pardon with God; the Adversary who before tempted us to presume, when he can no longer prevail that way, tempts to Despair: He persuades first to slight and neglect the Mercy of God, and then to doubt of obtaining if we should seek it. But these Glorious and Amazing Evidences of his Love and Good Will to Mankind, may justly prevent all Doubt or Despair, and give hopes of Mercy and Pardon even to the Greatest Sinner, upon his Repentance and Faith in Jesus Christ. It should not be doubted, since he has said it, that *whosoever believes in him shall not Perish, but have Everlasting Life*. How evident has he made it, that he is reconcilable to Sinners; when he has given his Son to die for Sinners!

ners! Is it a greater thing to give us Pardon and Salvation by Christ, than to give him to purchase these things for us; or when he has done this, is he to be thought hard to be reconciled? How can we doubt whether he will Pardon or not; or think him very hard to forgive, when he has himself provided a way to exercise his Forgiveness, so as it becomes him to do it! There is nothing now can hinder our recovering his Favour, but our own Neglect and Refusal to comply with the Terms of it. It is very justly argued by the Apostle, when he says of God, *Having given us his Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Having given his Son to make Satisfaction for our Sins, will he not readily give the Pardon of those Sins which the Son has made Atonement for, to them that duly seek it. He gave the greater part of the Gift without our seeking, will he not then give the lesser to it? The Gospel or Doctrine of Salvation by Christ, is preach'd that Men might seek their Salvation; 'tis therein offered to all that hear the Gospel, and shall not they, then succeed in seeking it, who are thereby brought to seek it? Can we reasonably think it has pleased God to Institute a Ministry, to command Preaching and the offer of Life and Salvation, to all that will earnestly desire and sincerely embrace it; and that he has done this only to deceive and abuse Men; that after all, they who Ask shall not receive, and they who seek shall not find Mercy? And since he has chosen rather to let his Son be an Offering for our Sins, than that we should Perish, is it not sufficiently evident, that he does not desire we should Perish, that he had rather Pardon our Sins, than take Vengeance on them; and thus Glorifie his Mercy in our Pardon, as he has done his Justice in the Death of Christ, rather than only to Glorifie his Justice in our Death and Destruction? He then that highly values the Favour of God, that earnestly and seriously seeks it, that does

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hunger and thirst after Righteousness, and comply with the establish'd Terms of Salvation; He shall certainly succeed, he shall not perish, but undoubtedly have Everlasting Life.

3. It must be added, that this great Love of God to us, does Indispensably require in us an Ardent and Intire Love to Him. The Thoughts of such a Love in him, should mightily Inflammé us, it should easily make us Love him, *with all our Heart, with all our Soul, with all our Mind, and with all our Strength,* as he requires us to do. Should not so Free, and so Condescending, so Rich and Bounteous, and so Forgiving and Merciful a Love, have a mighty Influence upon us? Should not this effectually conquer all our Enmity against God, and stifle all hard Thoughts of him; to see how loth he is to destroy or hurt us; to see him, letting go so fair and just an occasion to punish us, forgetting as it were our great Provocation, and concerning himself even when we were Enemies, when Rebels, when Guilty, to save us and make us Happy? Such Love requires that we be exceedingly grieved for our past Sins; that we be ashamed of so great Ingratitude as is in Sin; that we be deeply Offended with our selves for Offending him. It requires that we hate and fall out with every thing in our selves that is offensive to him; that we often search and examine our selves well, to see that no such thing may abide in us. Love is the best thing we have to return for his Love, and that certainly deserves our best return, which has obliged us by giving the Dearest Gift that he could bestow; as we may certainly speak of his giving his Son for us. Let us Love him then, and give our selves up to the Conduct of Love. Let Love chuse and direct all our Actions; Love to him purifie all our Intentions, and govern all our Affections. Love Inspire us with Industry and Diligence in his Service, with Zeal for his Glory, with Patience in Tribulation

bulation for his sake: Let it make us very stedfast in well-doing; sweeten and encourage all our Labours in Religion; and make whatever is pleasing to him, the greatest Pleasure to us.

4. Lastly, the great Love of God to Mankind requires of Men, that they also do Love one another. This Exhortation the Apostle expressly derives from hence, *1 John 4. 11. Beloved (says he) If God so loved us, we ought to Love one another.* His Love to Men should Inspire us with Love, and should direct ours. Does it not highly recommend Love, to see so much of it in him the Greatest and most Excellent Being! The more Love we have, the more we resemble him, *for God is Love*; and is not this very greatly our Honour? The foolish and deprav'd World think there is nothing Wise but the Love of our selves, and nothing so Great as to Disdain every one else, to revenge all our Injuries, and to destroy our Enemies, to be Sued to for our Benefits and hardly grant them, and to overlook and despise the Necessities, and even the Supplications of Inferiors: These things the World accounts great, and much affects them. But the great God, who surely is the Pattern of true Greatness, is also an Example of quite contrary things: We see him Sparing those whom he could Destroy, those who provoked him to Destroy them, doing the greatest Kindness before it was asked of him, Forgiving Injuries and Affronts, condescending to offer the greatest and most valuable Benefits to those that are Infinitely below him. If we would then be like to God, we must do thus. Should not such an Example shame Men out of their Pride, their Selfishness, their stubborn Anger and Malice? If we would pretend to Love God we must love our Neighbour, for he has commanded us to love our Neighbour; and if we love him we must keep his Commands. Therefore we are told in *1 John 4. 20.* that he does not love God that Hates his

VOL. II. The Love of God the Father. 199

his Brother, but is a Liar if he pretends to it. I shall conclude this Exhortation with the words of the Apostle in that Chapter. *Beloved, Let us Love one another, for Love is of God, and every one that Loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that Loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us. God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God and God in him. And this Commandment have we from Him, That he who Loveth God Love his Brother also.*

Now to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, Love and Praise for Evermore, Amen.

The PRAYER.

O Most Gracious and Merciful God, Thou art abundant in Goodness; the God of Love, and the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. An Infinite Fountain of Infinite Love! Thou art, O Lord, Great and Glorious, Infinite and Eternal Love. It was Love and Goodness which moved thee to Create: Love dwells in thee still unchangeably, and moves thee to preserve thy Creatures. Glorious, O Lord, is thy Love and Goodness in the Infinite Condescension of it, which regards and takes care of so mean things as the Highest Creatures are in comparison to thee: Glorious is it in the Freeness of its Exercises, for thy Creatures could never Merit of thee what thou hast done for them: It is Glorious in its large Wealth, its unexhaustible Store, and bounteous Communications, for it fills Heaven and Earth with thy Goodness, and Supplies and Blesses all thy Creatures. In thee we all live, and move, and have our Being; and from thee we derive all that does support and comfort our Being. And yet thy Love has done far greater things than these for the Children of Men. Oh that Men would therefore Praise the Lord for his Goodness, and for

his wonderful Works to the Children of Men! We Praise thee, we Bless thee, we Magnifie thee, for thine Inestimable Love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ, O wonderous Love that could still have Favour for Rebellious Creatures, for provoking Sinners! O Tender and Compassionate Love, that would help us out of that Misery which we had guiltily thrown our selves into! In which we might most justly have been left to Perish, as were the Apostate Angels in a like sad Case. O rich and bounteous Love, that has done so much to save unworthy Wretches, that has given thy Son, thy well-beloved, thy only Son, thine express Image, to the Abasement of being United to the Humane Nature, to the lower Abasement of being a Man of Sorrows, of living a mean and injur'd Life among us, and lower yet, even to the Humiliation of an Accur'd Ignominious Death, and all this for our sakes. Oh how rich a Gift have we in him, in his person, his Meritorious and Righteous Life, his Propitiatory Death, his Glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and his continual Intercession in Heaven for us, as our Great High Priest! How willing, Good Lord, hast thou appeared to be, that we should be Saved, who hast provided us such a Saviour, and laid our help upon one that is so mighty. O let this mighty Love of thine to us, mightily inflame our Love to thee. Let Love to thee possess our Hearts, and drive out from thence whatever is Impure and Displeasing to thee: Let Love dwell in our Thoughts, breath forth in our Words, and be exercised in all our Actions. Since thou art so kind and loath to destroy, let thy Goodness forcibly lead us to Repentance, reconcile us to thee and to thy Laws, banish from us all Enmity against thee. O Lord awaken us to a Serious Concern for our Salvation, make us earnestly Desirous and very Industrious to secure it. Let us not lose, by our Neglect, that everlasting Joy and Happiness, which by thy unspeakable Favour to us, thou hast made possible to be attained: Let us not be so Foolish as to neglect Salvation, nor so Ungrateful as to Despise and Refuse the Dear Purchase of thy Son's most Precious Blood. And give us, we beseech thee, a due Love to our Neighbour: O Fountain of Love, communicate to us much of this thy Glory. Teach us to condescend to do Good to those that are below us: To Love them that Hate us, to Forgive those that Injure us, to return Good for Evil: So let us Imitate thy Love, and

and order our Conversation aright before thee, that we may see thy Salvation.

We humbly recommend to thy Mercies all those Miserable Nations which yet know not thee or this Instance of thy Love : Beseeching thee that thy Good Providence may bring among them the Sound of thy Gospel to the Salvation of many among them. Give thy Churches a great Increase of Faith and Love, and all Vertue ; and be thou their Defence against the Power and Policy of Hell. This we especially beg for the Nations to which we belong : To which purpose we pray thee teach our Governours to Rule, and our People to Obey. Continue thy Blessed Ordinances amongst us in all the Happy Purity of the Established Religion : And make us to reverence and value, and diligently attend upon them ; and while we do so, we pray thee to give them a mighty Efficacy and Success to the Cleansing and Sanctifying both our Hearts and Lives. Let not those we have this day enjoy'd, be without good Effect to thy Glory and our Comfort. We heartily pray for all that are related to us, that they may know the Love of God in Christ Jesus, and knowing this, they may seek and obtain an Everlasting Interest in it. And do thou, we humbly beseech thee, shed abroad the Love of thee in all their Hearts, that they may become the Hallowed Temples of the Holy Ghost. Let us lie down this Night with a deep and admiring Sense of thy Love and Goodness, and have some further Experience of it in our Safe and Comfortable Rest, rising the next Morning with Health and Strength, and with Hearts set to do thy Will, and to shew forth thy Praise, not only with our Lips, but in the Holiness of our Lives. Grant these things, and whatever else thou seest needful for us, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

OUR Father, which art in Heaven ; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; But deliver us from evil : For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the Glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

The

The Love of God the Son to Mankind, Illustrated and Applied.

Let us Pray.

PREVENT us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Solomon's Song ch. 1. part of v. 4.

We will Rejoyce and be Glad in thee: We will remember thy Love more than Wine.

THIS Divine Book of Solomon's Song, represents and expresses the Loves, the mutual Endearments between Christ and the believing loving Souls. It was indeed calculated chiefly for the Times of Solomon, the Times before the Coming of Christ; but it is not unsuitable altogether, nor unuseful to ours, though the Christ be long since come into the World: Because the proper Exercises and Expressions of Love to him, are the same both before and after his Coming; and the

Exercises

Exercises and Expressions of his Love to Mankind are the same in both times, only they are now more Extensively and commonly afforded to Men. Besides, this Book is the more agreeable to us now, because we also do still expect a coming of the Christ: We expect his second coming to Judge the World, to satisfy his Servants with Expressions and Communications of his Love to compleat their Redemption by taking them to Perfect Happiness, and Everlasting Glory with himself. Our Kind Saviour, then, the Prince of Love and Peace, is the Person design'd in this Song, by the Name of the King: And his Church, or especially those in it, that are true Lovers of him, are meant by the Name of the Spouse. Whatever Expressions, then, here are of Tender and Compassionate Love in the King, towards the Spouse, such Exercises of Love may all Good Souls now expect, and many do receive from this Greatest Lover: And whatever Ardent, Reverential and Honourable Expressions of Love and Esteem for the King and Bridegroom, are here put into the Mouth of the Spouse, they are such as would very well become us that are of the Christian Church.

This Speech with which the Book begins, and of which our Text is a part, is an Address of the Spouse or Loving Soul to Christ, the King or Bridegroom of the Church, and expresses a great deal of Love and Esteem for him. I shall take no notice of any more of it, besides our Text, than what is said in the third Verse of the Chapter: *Because of the Saviour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins Love thee.* To understand which words the better, we may put them into this order, *Because of the Saviour of thy precious Ointments, therefore do the Virgins Love thee; Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth.* This Expression alludes to the common Custom of those Countries in their Entertainments, which was to pour upon their

their Guests some very richly perfum'd Oyl, anointing with it chiefly the Head and Temples: By this every one so anointed was mightily pleased and refresh'd himself, and was rendred also the more Acceptable and Grateful to all the Company. It alludes also to the Blessed Name under which this King and Bridegroom of the Church was promised and expected, even the Name Messiah or Christ, which signifies the Anointed One, him who was to be eminently Anointed, and to bear the Happy and Honourable Offices of all Anointed Persons. And so the meaning of the words is this: Because thou art to be the Anointed One, eminently so, who under the three most Happy and Beneficial Offices of Prophet, Priest and King, art to promote the Good and Happiness of Mankind, *Therefore do the Virgins love thee*; that is, all Pure and Devout Souls. As thou art the Anointed One, thou art most Desirable and most Grateful to such. Therefore did all truly Pious and Good Souls in the Jewish Church, then desire his coming into the World, and rejoyce in the Expectation of it: And therefore are all such Souls in the Christian Church Thankful for his Coming, and Glad and Joyful at the Remembrance of it.

I come now to the Text, and shall not at all consider it, as relating to the time when the Messiah was but expected, but rather in an Application of it to our times, as being so most useful to us. We may look upon it, then, as expressing such a Sense of the Messiah's great Love to Mankind, and such a Resolution thereupon as is very fit for us to entertain, even under the times of the Gospel: And indeed such a Sense of that Love is, perhaps, rather due from us now that the Christ is come, and *has done* for Mankind those Great Things which the Pious Jews expected he *would do*. Let us, then look upon this as what is very fit for us to resolve and say, *We will be Glad and Rejoyce in thee, we will remember thy Love more than Wine.*

Wine. This is that which is here recommended to us: To have a very Lively and Affectionate Sense and Remembrance of the Love of Christ to Mankind; to reckon this our best Treasure, and entertain our selves with it as our chief Delight and Pleasure.

My Business in speaking to these words, shall be to endeavour to promote a due Sense and Remembrance of the Love of Christ; to which purpose I shall insist upon these two following Heads of Discourse.

1. To represent, in some measure, and set before you, the Great and wonderful Love of the Messiah to Mankind.

2. To shew what a Remembrance of this is fitting and due to it.

In the first place, Let us take a view of the Love of Christ to Mankind; from whence we shall see abundant reason for a very sensible Remembrance of it. And let us consider it well, as represented in the following Particulars, each of which does greatly magnifie it.

1. We may consider the Benefits which the Messiah, out of his great Love, has purchased and procured for us. And here we shall see, it is not some small and inconsiderable Kindness that he has done us, but that which is of great Importance and Necessity. It is no less than Salvation that he has procured, and that a very *Great Salvation*. I can speak but Briefly and Summarily, of what must be spoken to in this Discourse, and therefore I shall mention the Benefits which the Love of Christ has procur'd but under these two General Heads.

(1.) We are by him Ransomed and Redeemed from the Lowest and most Deplorable Degree of Misery. We are in a Sense Redeemed from the Lowest Hell, in that we are by his Love excus'd from falling into it, when we did deserve and were Obnoxious

ous to do so. All Mankind became Guilty in our first Parents, and Obnoxious to God's Wrath, and that Eternal Death which was threatened against Sin. If we had been deserted in this Condition, all the Portion of Good that we could ever have enjoyed, must have lain in the Poor, Mingled, and Transitory Goods of this present Life: Enjoyments which could have afforded little Comfort without the Favour of God; which would have been sadly embittered by a Divine Curse, and which must have wanted that Blessing of God from whence they all derive their greatest Sweetness and Comfortableness. We must, it is likely, have found this present Life much more incumbered with Vexation and Calamity than it is: And after the lingering out of a few tedious Years under an insupportable Load of Cares, Griefs, Fears and Miseries, we must at last have been arrested by the fatal Hand of Death, and plunged into a Lake of Fire and Brimstone for our Eternal Prison: We must have been sent to the sad Place of Punishment and Misery which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels, to dwell for ever with them amidst Eternal Pains, Howlings and Despair. But the kind Son of God undertook to help us in this deplorable State, and in becoming the Messiah he has so successfully done it, that it is now possible for us to escape all this Misery. He has purchased and obtained that we may have a Blessed and Comfortable Enjoyment of the things convenient for us in this Life, and that the Evils we meet with here may be Mitigated, Sanctified and made Profitable, and even comfortable to us in their Fruits and Effects; and that we may be for ever excused from going down into Hell. This is a mighty and most obliging Deliverance. It is only because few Men know or do consider well what Redemption means, what intolerable Miseries, what an Eternity of Torments it frees us from; that they do commonly for

little

little value, and have so little Sense of this unspeakable Benefit. If any Man would in a very deliberate Meditation, suppose himself environed with Tormenting and Noisom Flames, chain'd down in them, insulted over in that condition by his Mortal Enemies, and condemn'd, unless a fit Ransom could be found, to endure all this Misery for ever; he could not chuse but think also with himself, that in such a case he should certainly be very ready to give ten thousand Worlds, if he had them, that he might Reverse such a Condemnation, and deliver himself from so much Misery! And then he must needs account it an unspeakable Favour to be kept from these Miseries; to have his Guilt, which deserves them, entirely done away, and to be excus'd from enduring such Torments even for the shortest space of time. Such is the Benefit and Favour which the Messiah has procured for us.

(2.) Another Benefit which the Love of Christ has purchased for us, is our Advancement to Everlasting and Perfect Happiness; He restores us to the Favour of God, to the Original Holiness and perfect Rectitude of our Nature, and to the Everlasting Happiness of Heaven. It is said, *We are reconciled to God by Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. 5. 18. He has made way for the Acceptance of our Repentance; and now the offended Father is ready to embrace with the Arms of his Mercy each returning Sinner. Many Sins he Pardons to such, and even the Greatest Offences; and *Justifies us freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus*. The Restoration and Rectitude of our Nature is begun in this Life, in his Sanctifying us by his Blessed Spirit, and upon his Merit it is that this Work is begun and carried on to Perfection. And as this Change does Advance in us, we do in the same degrees Advance towards Happiness. We grow towards Peace and Tranquility of Mind, towards a good Agreement with our selves, and

and the Enjoyment of a good Conscience, in the joyful and just Applauses of our selves. From this and the former Benefit we derive some Enjoyment of God in this Life, we enjoy God in all our Comfortable and Advantageous Circumstances, in knowing these to be allotted us by the Divine Favour and Love, and we enjoy him too in our Streights and Afflictions, while we also know, that even these proceed from Love, and shall work for our Good: This is Heaven begun here, and this beginning is the Sure Earnest, and the Comfortable Ground of firm Expectations, of the attaining a compleat Felicity hereafter. And this is that which the Love of the Messiah to Mankind does at last bring them to. It never ceases to Bless or Advance the Happy Objects of it till they need no more. It brings them at last to perfect Felicity, to unspeakable Joy, and there it fixes and settles them for ever. Thus from the lowest depth of Misery his Love raises Men to the highest degree of Happiness that we need or can desire! Thus Bounteous, thus Profitable and Beneficial is his Love! And these things surely demonstrate it be a very great One. Here is Scope for a great deal of Meditation on this Head, of the Benefits he has procured for us; but I must also propose other Illustrations of his Love, and therefore shall now leave this, and proceed to another.

2. Let us consider also that which it cost him to purchase or procure these great Benefits for us. We may say he did not easily procure them, and knew he could not easily do it, yet he has done it, and that greatly magnifies his Love. As he has appeared not to grudge us the greatest Benefits imaginable, so neither does he seem to have regarded what it would cost him to procure them. He has appeared resolv'd to Save us at any Rate. For it is very much that he has done to this purpose. Though I think it may be mostly contain'd under these two great and com-
prehensiv

prehensive Instances of his Condescension. 1. He took upon him our Poor and Mean Nature. He also died for our Sins upon the Cross.

(1.) To procure these things for us, the Son of God became Incarnate, and took upon him the Human Nature, *The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us*, John 1. 14. Thus was he made under the Law, that he might Redeem them that were under the Law, Gal. 4. 4, 5. This indeed was no inconvenience, nor was it displeasing to him to be subject to a Pure and Holy Law: But yet there was very great Condescension in this, that the Son of God should subject himself to a Law made for Creatures. And his Incarnation or Becoming Man, did further expose him to many Grievous and Inconvenient things. By reason of this he had the same Weak and Contemptible sort of Formation and Birth with the rest of Mankind. At eight days old he began to be numbered with the Transgressors, and suffered the Painful Bloody Sacrament of Circumcision. It was Necessary and Suitable to his Design, since he would dwell among us, live a poor and obscure Life, to despise and avoid all Worldly Greatness, and to take upon him, as he did, the Form of a Servant. He submitted to the Innocent Infirmities of our Nature, in taking upon himself our Nature; and felt Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Heat: And very often was he tir'd while he went about doing Good, and *seeking to save that which was lost*. In dwelling among Men he came to those who were very unsuitable to him, and many ways Displeasing as well as Unkind and Uneasie to him. He dwelt among Sinners, which must be very Ungrateful to his Purity and Holiness. He could suffer no Defilement from the World, but yet we find that he was often Vexed and Grieved with the Wickedness that he found in it, and often did he endure the Perverse and Foolish Contradiction of Sinners. He was persecuted by

Men even from his Birth to his Death: When he was but newly Born his Life was sought by the Cruel and Ambitious *Herod*; and to save it from him, it was exposed to the Dangers and Difficulties of taking a long Journey from one Kingdom to another. His Good was Evil spoken of; and because he conversed with Publicans and Sinners to Reform and Amend them, he was reproached as such an one himself, *As a Man Gluttonous, and a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners.* His kind and beneficial Miracles were Spitefully imputed to Sorcery and Imposture; and they said, He did cast out Devils by *Beelzebub the Prince of Devils.* These things were the necessary Attendants of his Incarnation and coming to dwell among Men, and all these he condescended to for our sakes. "For us Men, and for our Salvation, he came down from Heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin *Mary*, and was made Man; as the Ancient Creed speaks.

(2.) But yet 'tis far worse than all this, that which he Suffered in his Death upon the Cross for us. "He was Crucified also for us under *Pontius Pilate*, as the same Creed speaks. *He was Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross*, as the Scripture says. Upon Mount *Calvary* was he strip'd of his Cloaths, and his Naked Body, wounded with Stripes he had received before, was exposed to the Cold Air. There his Barbarous Crucifiers nail'd his Hands and his Feet with great Nails to the Wood, and then they erected the Cross that he might hang upon those Nails. Thus for three long Hours he abode enduring the very Sensible and Grievous Pain of such a Punishment: And was forsaken in this Condition by those whom he had obliged, was insulted over by his Enemies, and reviled by those that passed by. And which was more than all this, he endured his Father's Forsaking too, and the Expressions of his Anger and Wrath against the Sins of Men. He was
Smitten

Smitten of God, and Afflicted with Inward and In-
visible, but with the most Sensible and Grievous
Tortures. *All we, like sheep, have gone astray, and
God hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all.* Thus *He*
was wounded for our Transgressions, that by his Stripes
we might be healed. He endured Grief and Trouble,
that we might have Joy and Consolation. He en-
dured a deadly Thirst, to give us to drink of the
Rivers of Pleasure at God's Right-hand for Ever-
more. He was forsaken of Men, and lost the Com-
fort of Friends, yea, and of the Father too for a
time, to give us the Eternal Happiness and Joy of
his Favour. He made his Innocent Soul a very Af-
flicted Offering for our Sins, and died to give us Life.
Thus have we been *Redeemed, not with corruptible*
things, such as Silver and Gold, but with the Precious
Blood of Jesus Christ; and that shed too with great
Pain and Ignominy, and with great Sufferings both
from God and Men.

3. Let us now, to apprehend further the Great-
ness of his Love, consider also the Great Dignity and
Eminence of the Person who has done so much for
us; and we cannot chuse but see, upon a due Consi-
deration of this, that it does greatly magnifie and com-
mend his Love. He is no other than the Second Per-
son of the Glorious Trinity, *The only begotten Son of*
God; as he is called, *John 3. 16.* whom the Ancient
Creed foremention'd does therefore stile "Very God
" of Very God; Begotten not Made, being of one
" Substance with the Father. *He thought it no Robbery*
to be Equal with God, 'tis said, *yet made himself of no*
Reputation, *Phil. 2. 6, 7.* and this he did for our
sakes. But how great and amazing Love does this
discover and shew! That he who inhabited Eterni-
ty, and enjoy'd the Stability and Repose, and the
pleasing Tranquility of that, should come to mingle
himself with the Vicissitudes and Changes, the Un-
certainties and Verations of Time and Transitory
Things!

Things! That God should become Man for the Sake of Men! The Almighty put on the Weakness of an Infant! that he whom Angels Adore, should submit to bear the Scorn and Affronts of Men! That he who only has Immortality, should condescend to Die for us! From how great Glory to how great Ignominy and Self Abasement did he descend to do us Good! There is so great a Disproportion between God and Man, and so wide a Distance, that nothing but an Infinite Love could have filled up and measured the Mighty Space between them; especially when Man had made it yet greater by his Guilt and the Pollution of his Nature. It was never seen that the Heir of a Sovereign Prince would condescend to suffer Death for his Father's Rebellious Subjects to Atone his Father's Just Anger, and bring them into Reconciliation and Favour. Yet such a thing as this He did, and what is indeed Infinitely a greater Condescension, as God is Infinitely above his Creatures.

4. Let us now, in the last place, consider, that the Son of God did most freely, and of his own Accord, do all this for us. There was no Motive to this but our Misery, and his own Good Will and Tender Compassion: And our Misery might very justly have been slighted, because our own Guilt had contracted it. There was no Merit of his Love on our parts, no Obligation at all laid on him to do any thing for us. But on the contrary we were undeserving Rebels; *Christ died for the Ungodly*. To them who had forfeited all Favour and Mercy, to them was the greatest Favour shewn. He willingly offered himself to be a Mediator between God and us: He willingly took our Nature, and bore our Sins. He laid down his own Life for us. He had done us no Good in all he did, if it had not been Voluntary and Free: For none but an Innocent and Spotless Sacrifice could have made Atonement for Sin: And

And a Satisfaction for Sin could not justly be taken from the Sufferings of an Innocent Person, unless he had voluntarily undergone those Sufferings: Our Iniquities could not have been laid upon him, if he had not freely, willingly offered himself to bear the grievous weighty shameful Load. Now upon this account 'tis truly said, *That by Grace we are Saved*, Eph. 2. 5. that is, By meer and free Goodness. And of him 'tis said, *He Loved us, and gave himself for us.*

Thus I have in some measure represented the great Love of the Messiah, or the Son of God, to Mankind; I say in some measure, but I must acknowledge it a very imperfect one: For this Love, as the Apostle justly says, *Passes Knowledge*, Eph. 3. 19. that is, it exceeds and goes beyond a comprehensive Knowledge in us. It is greater than that the Tongues of Men can express, or the Wit and Capacity of Angels can have a perfect Conception of: It must suffice us to know, that 'tis, a Free, Beneficent, Condescending Love; that 'tis very Necessary, very Important and Advantageous to us; and that 'tis upon these accounts a most valuable, most obliging, and a wonderful Love. And these things, I think, do appear in what has been now said of it. And from hence, I think, we must needs be disposed to acknowledge, that such a Love as this deserves a very peculiar Sense and Remembrance of it in us: So that I hope we are prepared to entertain what must be said on the second part of the Discourse.

I proposed to shew, in the second place, How we should remember this great Love of the Son of God, who became the Messiah, towards Mankind. Let us see, then, with what Characters and Effects this is fit to be remembred by us.

1. Our Remembrance of this should be attended with very frequent and delightful Thoughts of it, and of the Great things which it has done for us. I

must be a very lively Remembrance, and therefore must bring it often to our Minds, and it should also mightily affect us, or else it is not suitable to, or worthy of so great and matchless a Love. The Remembrance of this ought to be an Inhabitant, not a Sojourner in our Minds: It should be the very Disposition and Temper of our Souls to think of it, to be affected with it. The Love of Christ and Thoughts of that, ought to be our common Antidote against Temptation or Lust; our ordinary Comfort and Support under Worldly Crosses and Afflictions: This should at all times delight and please us, this should be our greatest and our strongest Consolation; it should be more pleasant to us than the pleasantest things of this World. And if it were thus pleasant to us to Meditate on this Love, it could not be but we should very frequently return to the thoughts of it. These things necessarily go together; therefore the Spouse in the Text, when she had said to the King, *We will be Glad and Rejoyce in thee*, She very fitly adds, *We will remember thy Love more than Wine*, intimating, that if the Love of Jesus be our greatest Delight, our chiefest Solace and Pleasure, it will and must needs be very often in our Thoughts, more often than the smaller Consolations of this World.

It cannot consist with a due Sense of the Redeemer's great Love, to think seldom or very coldly of it. This is not such a Remembrance as speaks a great Value and Esteem of it; but certainly such an Esteem we ought to have. And if we have such, though we should perhaps be apt to forget the mighty Favours and Obligations of his Love, yet we shall not be willing to do so: But rather the more apt we find our selves to this, the more careful we shall and ought to be, to maintain and keep alive in our selves a due Remembrance of it. Since then the Cares, the Enjoyments, the Businesses, and perhaps the Afflictions of this Life are apt to put this too

much

much out of our Minds, or to cool the Remembrance of it; it becomes us, and is very necessary that we carefully Improve all Occasions and Opportunities of reviving this, and of making it very Efficacious and Powerful upon our Minds. And especially when the Redeemer himself has been pleased to direct us to a way of keeping alive a due Sense of his Love, in the Celebration of the Sacrament of his Supper: This is that which all who love the Lord Jesus at all, and are desirous to maintain, to increase the love of him, will mightily value, and very diligently attend upon it. Love cannot endure to be forgetful of so obliging a Lover; and therefore it will often make use of this Memorial of him, to Antidote against the Cares and Busineses of this Life. We must never suffer our selves, if any endeavour can prevent it, to be unfit for this Sacrament, when the Opportunity of receiving it comes.

2. Our Remembrance of the Redeemer's Love must produce in us, and be attended with a great Esteem of the Benefits and Advantages which it has purchased for us. We ought to account these as things of very great Importance, since he has done so much to obtain them for us; to account them really the best and the most Important things, and accordingly to desire or enjoy them. Do we not despise his love, if we prefer any thing before these? If we find our selves mightily transported with the Hopes and Prospect of being Great or Rich in this World, and spurred to make the best we can of Circumstances which seem to promise us such things: but have no Motions of Soul, no suitable Desires or Endeavours upon Hearing that we may be reconciled to God, that we may be the Objects of his Eternal Love, that we may obtain Everlasting and Perfect Joy and Felicity from the love of Jesus, this is a sign that we value more the good things of this **Transitory** World, than the Eternal Purchases of

his Love and Sufferings. The Spouse in our Text says, in the Name of all truly Believing and Loving Souls, *We will Remember thy Love more than Wine.* It shall be more Pleasant to us, shall be of greater Esteem with us, than any Pleasant or Useful thing of this World. Such an Esteem and Preference of those things, the Apostle Paul expresses too, *Phil. 3. 8. I count all things (says he) but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; and I account them but Dung, that I may win Christ.*

3. Our Remembrance of the love of Christ, ought to produce in us an Ardent and Sincere love to him. If we do think of and Remember this, without love to him, How unreasonable and unfruitful were this! How great a Flame of Affection should so great a Love as his kindle in us! We were altogether unworthy of his love, yet he has first loved us: But if we do not answer his love with a mutual Affection, we make our selves yet further unworthy of it. Let us consider, how greatly displeasing it must needs be to him, to have done so much for us, to have so exceedingly desired our love, to have courted and sought our Affections with so vast Obligations, and yet to be slighted and despised. If we render him the best love we can, it will yet be infinitely below his; we can never fully requite it. Love is the best return we can make him; 'tis the best thing we have to give, and 'tis that which he values most: And shall we not give him that, who has given, as we may say, his best to us; Who has laid down his Life for us, and, in a Sense, parted with Glory and Happiness to do us Good? Let us love him, then, as he does infinitely deserve, and study to express our love to him in the whole Course of our Lives. Let us, as he himself directs, Love him and keep his Commandments: Express our love by a great readiness to do his Will, and by giving up our selves to Serve and Please him: To be intirely his, who, in a sort, has

has been entirely ours ! Let us Live to him that Died for us : Love must be Diligent and Constant in the Duties and Services which he gives us to perform ; must do all it can to please him ; and be glad to know any thing that will please him. When it has done all it can, it will think all but little in comparison to his Great Love and Obligations : It will then, never be a-weary of well-doing, of doing that which he requires ; of the most laborious Service, or Patient Suffering for his Sake. And Love will also, be very Sensible of whatever is Offensive to him : it will endure nothing that would displease him : It will be wounded with a great deal of Grief for whatever Sins it falls into, when it considers that these were the things that wounded and killed the Loving Jesus. He that loves much, will be more Sorry for the least Failings, for ordinary Infirmities, than others would be for the Greatest Enormities. Love will mortifie the most Darling Sins, whatever Pleasure or Conveniency they may promise : It will teach a man to deny himself any thing, to comply with the Will, and serve the Interest of him whom we love. If we have a due Sense of the love of Christ to Mankind, and do truly love him for it, we shall be ready to say to him, in the meaning of what the Church speaks in our Text. O Jesu, Thou art my Love, Thou art my chief Consolation and Delight, Thou art the only Joy of my Soul ! *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth that I can desire besides thee :* While others place their Satisfaction in Wealth or Worldly Honours ; While some are transported with the Pleasures of Sense, I value nothing but thee, I love none so much as thee : Thy Love, Dear Lord, is my highest Honour, thy Love is my richest Wealth, my Sweetest Pleasure. *I will be Glad and Rejoyce in thee.* Night and Day will I So-lace my self with thee. I will chiefly entertain my self, while I am in this World, with thy Love, and
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the inestimable Benefits it affords: My Thoughts shall often carry my Soul to thee, till I can come my self to dwell with thee, and I will remember thee rather than any thing else, *I will remember thy Love more than Wine.*

The P R A Y E R.

O Blessed Jesu, Prince of Peace, and greatest Lover of Mankind, have Mercy upon us. O Christ Hear us, We Adore thee, O Lord, we Magnifie, we Praise thee for the Wonderful Love thou hast shewn to Miserable and Lost Sinners! There is no Love like thine! O how Willing, how Desirous, hast thou appeared to Save us, in thy Condescending so low, as to take our Mean and Poor Nature upon thee! And yet lower, in thy bearing the Form of a Servant among us! And lower yet, in thy undergoing for us a Bitter, Shameful, and Accursed Death! O Love unspeakable, exalted beyond all Blessing and Praise! That thou shouldest give thy self to be Wounded for us, that we might be Healed of the Wounds we had Foolishly given our selves! And to Die, that we might recover from the Death we had thrown our selves into! And might Live an Eternal Life! This thy Love we highly Value and Esteem, for so Great and Inestimable Benefits, at a great Cost to thy self procur'd for us by it. And we must acknowledge it is due to thy Love, that it be often in our Thoughts, that we think of it with Ardent Affections; and that we do Esteem above all things, the Benefits which it has purchased, and is willing to bestow. We thank thee, O Lord, that we have leave to desire so Great and Necessary things, and that we have Hopes to Obtain them. And to thee we come, on thee alone we rely for our Salvation. Since thy Love has condescended to purchase this for us, we cannot doubt of thy Willingness to bestow it. We believe, O Lord, that those who come unto thee, thou wilt in no wise reject. Thou hast not lost that Mighty Love to Sinners, which brought thee from Heaven, since thou art ascended thither. Behold, then, a small handful of Miserable Creatures here before thee, and O Son of *David* have Mercy upon us. We are all Polluted with Sin, which like a Leprosie overspreads

us; but, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make us Clean. O wash us thoroughly from our Iniquity, and cleanse us from our Sin. We are grieved and wearied with the Burthen of our Guilt, let us with thee find rest to our Souls. We fear the Terrible Wrath which our Iniquities have deserved, O Lamb of God that takest away the Sins of the World, Grant us thy Peace. We have nothing, O Lord, but Misery to bring to obtain thy Mercy and Favour; and to thy Infinite and Free Love we need bring nothing but an Humble Penitent Sense of our Misery. Take us, then, we beseech thee, under thy Protection; Procure for us, by thy Intercession, what thou hast purchased for Lost Sinners. And let all our Sins be Forgiven to us: Give us the Grace of thy Holy Spirit, to Amend our Lives according to thy Holy Word: Loosen the Bonds of our Iniquity, and set our Wretched Souls at Liberty to run the Way of thy Commandments. It is the Just Purpose and Resolution of our Souls, to Live to thee, who hast Died for us; to deny our selves to Please thee, to take up our Cross and follow thee: O let thy Grace be sufficient for us. Grant us to live as becomes the Gospel, and to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Let thy Favour vouchsafe to guide us by thy Counsel while we are here and bring us at last unto thy Glory. Let thy Love, O Blessed Jesu, be known to all the World, that all Men may Praise the Lord for his Goodness, and for his Wonderful Works to the Children of Men. Inspire we beseech thee, thy Universal Church with a Spirit of Truth, Unity, Meekness and Obedience. Let all that name the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity. Save and Defend all Christian Kings, Princes and Governors, especially thy Servant *Anne* our Queen and Governour: Give her an Abundant Portion of thy Spirit, that she may Rule to thy Glory, her own Comfort, and her Peoples Welfare. Give all Subjects the Grace to Honour and Obey their Governours as thy Representatives and Vice-gerents in the World. Bring all that are related to us, to Know and Love thee, and Submit to thee, and to be Partakers of the Matchless Benefits of thy Love. We thank thee, O Lord, for all thy Goodness to us, for such a measure as we have enjoy'd of things necessary for Life and Godliness: particularly for the Temporal and Spiritual Mercies of this day; Let all Advance us in Faith, and Love, and Obedience. Obtain for us, O Jesu, a Comfortable and Quiet Rest this Night, and that we may

may rise the next Morning with Health and Strength, may continue useful in our several Places to thee and to one another all our Days; and when we go hence may be admitted to Eternal Rest. All our Requests we put up in thy Name, as thou hast directed us, and conclude them in the words thou hast taught us, saying,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

The

The Danger and Unreasonableness of Following a Multitude to do Evil, Represented.

Let us Pray.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Exodus XXIII. 2.

Thou shalt not Follow a Multitude to do Evil.

THIS Text of Scripture supposes the Generality and Commonness of Evil in the World, to be a very great Snare and Temptation to Men: And this, indeed, is what our own Observation may also abundantly convince us of. We may see, that when any Multitudes of Men do wickedly, there are but few Young Persons that can grow up into the World, without being carried away with the Common Stream: And we may as often see, that those who are involved in the Common Wickedness, will not be reclaimed; they are hardened in their Evil Courses by the Number of the Guilty. A General Wickedness

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is like a General Plague, in which the Sound are in great Danger of falling Sick, and the Sick are in the greater Danger of Dying of the Disease.

Now to oppose the Danger and ill Influence of this too forcible Temptation in the best way I can think of, I shall first enquire into the Nature of it, to find out in what ways it chiefly has its Malignant Influences; and then I shall oppose proper Remedies or Arguments against it. The following Discourse, then, must consist of these Parts.

The First to shew, How or in what way the Multitude of Sinners is apt to have so bad an Influence; which will be something towards the Preventing or Curing of it.

The Second is, To Oppose against the Temptation, such Considerations as are proper Remedies of it.

To shew, in the first place, How the Common Wickedness is wont to prevail upon Men, with its Infectious Influence, I must desire that these following Particulars may be observed.

1. It comes to pass partly by this means: Men are very apt to think that Innocent and Good, which the Common Practice and Custom have entertained. They will suppose there is good reason for the common Practice, though they know not any. Some, if they have but a great Number of Precedents for what they do, will think to justify and allow themselves in the doing it from thence, without considering whether they are Good Precedents or Bad ones. If the Nations of the World have commonly done such things, or it has been the ordinary Practice of their own Nation in like cases to do so, this they will have to prove the Lawfulness of the thing whatever it is. With some it goes for a just Maxim or Rule, That the Voice of the People is the Voice of God. And so when the People of *Ephesus* cried out for two hours together, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, *Acts*

19. 28. this according to these Men, should rather be accounted the Voice of God, than the Preaching of an Inspired Apostle. When a Multitude join in any Wickedness, and carry their Unjust Will and Designs by their Number, this is a great Temptation with many, to think that God approves their Designs : And that which Prospers they will have to be Good ; that which cannot Prosper they will have to be Evil : And who shall dare to condemn that which God does, as they think, Justifie and Approve ? The worst Designs, if they can draw in great Numbers of Men, shall pretend to be Lawful, Just and Necessary ; plausible Reasons are found out for them, as it is easie to do for any thing, by the Crafty Managers of the Designs ; and specious Names and fair Colours are put upon them : And these Amuse and Deceive the Unthinking Multitude, and then none shall Contradict or find Fault with them but at their Peril : They will not hear that any thing is amiss in what they are thus managed to have a mind to do. And if the Multitude generally agree in any thing, though 'tis commonly but a little while that they do so, and cry it up for Good and Just, it looks with the World like Arrogance and Pride for any Man to Dissent from them, and every one will be ready to say to such a Person, What, will you think your self Wiser than all the World ? Thus a Mistake, if it be common, though never so gross an one, may set up for Truth, and Common Evil for Good, and may pass for such with many, because they must not be confuted or exposed.

2. The Ill Influence of Common Wickedness proceeds in a great measure from hence ; That it takes away much of the Restraint of Shame. This, as long as it remains in a Man, has some Power to keep him Religious, Sober and Obedient : But if he is not ashamed to be otherwise, any Temptation and Opportunity will be able to Corrupt him : The removal of

of Shame to do Ill, destroys and weakens Conscience; So that it shall either not Check a Man at all for it, or too feebly to Restrain him. And there is nothing more apt to destroy this Restraining, than to meet with a Multitude of Offenders, to have a great deal of Company in doing Ill: The Commonness of Sin always adds Boldness to it; and that which hides it self when but few are Guilty, grows Impudent enough to face the Sun when many are. Men are not ashamed to do an Evil thing, when where-ever they come almost they find others that are dip'd in the same Guilt; then they every where meet with some that will Justifie and Defend, or Excuse it: Or at least they will not fear to be reprov'd for it, so often as otherwise they might expect to be: They know they shall not be Condemned by those that are guilty of the same thing, or that they can easily Despise and Retort the Reproof and Condemnation of such Men: But especially if the Multitude of the Offenders has given a Man a good Opinion of an evil Thing, it is no wonder if in that case he is not ashamed to do, and to own it.

3. The Commonness of Vice and Sin, does usually many ways take off the Restraining of Human Laws: Thus is another great Restraining of Wickedness taken out of the way, and thus it cannot chuse but do a great deal of Harm in the World. Since Corrupt Nature inclines to do Evil, and there are many Temptations to it in this World, the less Restraining there is, the more Wickedness there must needs be; and then, when it is common, it *will still* be so, and when many *are* Wicked, more *will* be Wicked. In this case hardly will any Laws at all be made against Vice and Wickedness, or if any be, they shall be so Soft and Gentle ones, as shall never be effectual to cure it. If a Multitude, Debauch'd and Corrupted in Principles or Manners, have the chusing of those that shall make Laws for them, will they not chuse such as are
most

most like themselves? Such as are tainted with the common Sins? And are any good Laws ever to be expected against Debauchery and Prophaneness, from Debauched and Prophane Men? Or against Unquiet Factions, and Restless Endeavours to alter Governments, by Men that are Factionous themselves, and that desire Alterations, for the gratifying their own Pride and Lust of Ruling, or of their Covetousness by having their Neighbours Property at their Mercy?

But if Strict and Severe Laws, against Sin and Wickedness, were made before the time of General Corruption, then, as it is for want of a good Execution of those Laws, that Wickedness has so generally prevailed so, while it is so common, That Execution is likely to be woefully relaxed: And very hard it will be to execute them to any effectual degree. When Wickedness is very common, perhaps many of the Great are Guilty; and because they find ways to escape Punishment, many others will escape too. They, according to the Old and Wise Similitude, like Wasps and Hornets, break through the Cobwebs of Law, and then the lesser Flies pass safely through the holes which they make: To punish some and not others, is a Partiality that Disparages any Government, and by consequence weakens it, and lessens the Reverence and Fear of it in the Minds of Men. Further, when there is a great Multitude of Offenders, Justice is as it were discouraged from attempting to reform them, because the Work is Great, and likely to be Long and Difficult. And it being generally an Unpleasing Work to Punish, Men are easily perswaded to let it alone, to yield to the Seeming Necessity of the Time, and let things go as they will: And the Relaxations to Discipline and the Execution of Laws, takes place under the specious Name of Clemency and Mildness of Government. Further, In Times of Common Wickedness, perhaps the

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of Shame to do Ill, destroys and weakens Conscience! So that it shall either not Check a Man at all for it, or too feebly to Restrain him. And there is nothing more apt to destroy this Restraint, than to meet with a Multitude of Offenders, to have a great deal of Company in doing Ill: The Commonness of Sin always adds Boldness to it; and that which hides it self when but few are Guilty, grows Impudent enough to face the Sun when many are. Men are not ashamed to do an Evil thing, when where-ever they come almost they find others that are dip'd in the same Guilt; then they every where meet with some that will Justifie and Defend, or Excuse it: Or at least they will not fear to be reprov'd for it, so often as otherwise they might expect to be: They know they shall not be Condemned by those that are guilty of the same thing, or that they can easily Despise and Retort the Reproof and Condemnation of such Men: But especially if the Multitude of the Offenders has given a Man a good Opinion of an evil Thing, it is no wonder if in that case he is not ashamed to do, and to own it.

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Magistrates themselves are commonly Guilty of that which they should Punish in others, and it may be hard for a Religious and Good Prince to find out such to make Magistrates of as are not so. But those that are Corrupt themselves, will never be Industrious, or Steady, in the putting good Laws in Execution against Offenders. Lastly, Sometimes a Multitude of Offenders are too Strong for the Arms of Justice; and then instead of Fearing the Magistrate, they will make him stand in Fear of them, and perhaps if he endeavours to Restrain them from their Beloved Wickednesses, they will dispose of him. By these ways is the Restraint of Humane Laws much taken off, when this is the Condition of any Time and People.

4. When Wickedness is very Common, it will seem necessary to Men to comply with it for the sake of their worldly Interest; and this shall draw them to be Partners and Companions in it. They find this perhaps Useful or Necessary to the carrying on their Trade, they are link'd to a sort of Sinners by the business, which maintains or makes them rich; and it must be carried on still by their holding a fair Correspondence with these, and therefore they must follow their Evil ways: And either they will not fairly examine those ways, for fear they should be convinc'd of the Evil of them, or they will dissemble their Conviction out of regard to their Interest. Some are mightily desirous of common popular Applause, and they flatter the multitude, and Swim with the Stream, that they may be carried and buoy'd up by it. There are few that have the Courage to go against a common Stream, for fear it should sink them. And if a Man does not comply with the Multitude, he must expect to live as in a Wilderness, to have few or no Friends but many Enemies; to have very little Benefit or Kindness from the World, and to meet with rather a great deal of Malice and Mischief. But these

these are Temptations of great Force, and such as but few can withstand: While we live in this World, we must often need the Kindness, and Friendship, and Assistance of others; and it will be very hard for a Man to chuse, or be steady in that Course in which he is forsaken of Friends, and shall have many Enemies. Especially is this hard to us, because we are commonly Defective in our Trust in God: We do not know how to believe the Psalmist, when he says, *Trust in the Lord, and do Good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* Psal. 37. 3. And we can hardly believe our Saviour, when he says, *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto you,* Matt. 6. 33. And this is further difficult, by reason of our Common Excessive Desires after the things of this World, because few can content themselves with a Convenient and Competent Portion; we are all big with the Design to raise a Fortune, as we call it, to get Superfluous Riches, or an Envied heighth of Dignity and Honour: We cannot follow the Apostles Advice, *If we have Food and Raiment, to be therewith Content,* 1 Tim. 6. 8. And thus the Love of this World, which is a very common Disease in the Minds of Men, helps to promote the Evil and Infectious Influence of Common Wickedness.

5. Lastly, This State of the World often gives Ill Men Power to Persecute those who will not comply with it; or Boldness to Deride and Scorn Religion and Vertue, and to Tempt and Allure others into the Common Sins.

Sometimes, I say, a Common Wickedness may so far prevail, as to Establish Iniquity by a Law, and to Enact Severe Penalties for those that will not comply with it: And then Good Men are Persecuted for Righteousness sake; And there are but few that can resist such a Temptation: That can take *Joyfully the spoiling of their Goods,* and prefer the *Afflictions of*

the People of God, before the Pleasures and present Advantages of Sin. Many who seem'd to have been mighty Zealons for the true Religion, yea, perhaps to have been the only Persons that were true to it; yet they in the time of such a Temptation, are seen to fall away, to joyn and take part with the Persecutors of the Truth, to Flatter, Assist and Encourage them in their Persecution.

Further, As this does sometimes give Men Power thus to Persecute Religion and Vertue; so it does more often give them Boldness to Deride and Scorn it. They are mightily Elevated and Encouraged with their own Numbers, and despise a small Number of Voraries to Religion and Vertue: They will be the Wisest that are the greatest Number; and they will Vote for one another that are so: Then that which is nothing but Prophaneness, shall have the Vogue for Wit; and that which is Wise and Good, shall be accounted Dull and Foolish. And this is a Temptation that can prevail with many, because we have not so well considered, nor so well grounded a Resolution to be Religious, as we might have: We never Deliberately and Soberly considered the Reasonableness, and the Wisdom of being so; nor have convinced our selves as we might do, of the absolute Necessity of it, to our present and Eternal Happiness: Were we duly Sensible of these things, we should be able to Pity or Scorn the Folly of those that Deride a Religious Life; we should believe their Profance Wit to be of the same sort with that in a Bedlam, where an Hospital is accounted a Palace, and Chains the Ornaments and Ensigns of Grandeur and Liberty; we should understand these Fools to be proud of Misery, and Laughing in the ways of Perdition.

Further, in a Time of Common Wickedness, there will be many that will perswade and allure others to be wicked, As Men get Confidence to commit
their

their Sins by the Number of Companions, so they get enough to recommend them too; to Boast of their Wickedness, and Praise themselves and others for their Ill Deeds. And Praise and Commendation is that which we all mightily desire and love, and this shall be able to tempt and encourage Foolish and Inconsiderate Sinners to do even that which deserves to be condemned. Wicked Men are the more ready to tempt others, because they hereby Free themselves from the Reproofs and Condemnations of so many as they can perswade to be like themselves. If it be hard for a Man to be Religious alone, which is a thing so agreeable to Reason, and which may be justified to a Sober Consideration, 'tis yet harder for a Man to be Wicked alone, and therefore no Man will care to be so; therefore such Men mightily endeavour to make at least all that they converse with such as themselves. But if one Wicked Man sets himself to encourage and perswade to Wickedness, he shall be able to do a great deal of Harm; as *Solomon* says, *One Sinner destroys much Good*, Eccles. 9. 18, much rather, then, will a Multitude of such be able to do so. It is too commonly seen, that such who are wicked, are more Industrious to Draw or Encourage others to adhere to their Party, than those that follow Truth and Goodness: The Children of this World, are in this respect wiser than the Children of Light.

Thus I have finished the First part of this Discourse, which was designed to shew, How the Common Wickedness of any Time comes to have such Power and Advantage as it usually has, towards the continuance, or the further propagating of Wickedness. I shall now, as I promised, lay down such Considerations as may be fit to hinder Men from complying at any time with Common Wickedness: And they are these following

1. Let it be considered, That there is a great deal of Reason to believe those things may be very Evil and Wicked which the Multitude Practise. It is supposed a Multitude may do wickedly, when we are caution'd, as in our Text, not to *Follow a Multitude to do Evil*; and Christians are bid not to *Conform themselves to this World*, as Rom. 12. 2. That may be very unfit to be done, which yet is the Common Practice of Mankind. There are often in the World Men that affect to be Popular, and are very Fond and Ambitious to Rule; these court the Multitude, and cry up such Principles right or wrong, as gratify their Corrupt Humours, and seem Calculated for their worldly Interest, and by this means engage them in ways and Designs that are wicked, under the specious Name and Pretence of some Good.

Further, it is reasonable enough to believe that the most of Men follow their Inclinations and Humours, or the Track of their present worldly Interests, without much Examination of the way they take: Or that they are often Imposed upon, and have their Judgments byass'd by their Inclinations, and Interests. We may often observe these things, and see that there is nothing more Difficult, than 'tis to convince a Man, that any thing is his Duty which is contrary to his Humour, and the way of Living he chuses, or that seems to him contrary to his worldly Interests.

And we may further observe among Mankind, that a great many set themselves to learn only what others do, that they may imitate and follow it; to study the Fashions and Customs of the World, that they may conform to them: Much more common this is, than to examine those Fashions and Customs by the Rules of Religion, to know whether they are good and lawful ones or not. A natural Proneness there is in all Mankind, to Imitation and the following of Examples; and we do seldom

care

care for the Trouble of examining well the Nature and Tendency of our Actions: We easily satisfy our selves with them, if we see others in the same Course. We imitate without Consideration, and finding a ready beaten Track, we go on in it without much enquiring whither it tends, and so are most likely to follow the Broad Road which leads down to Perdition. When 'tis thus with the World, How reasonable is it to suspect, that even the Multitude may be often mistaken in the way they chuse; And it is neither Arrogance nor Pride to suppose this in many Cases. How apt must the corrupted Nature of Mankind be, to chuse Evil ways when they seldom or never examine well the ways which they chuse? We have no good Reason, then, to conclude, that a thing must be Good, Innocent or Lawful, because we see a Multitude engaged in it.

Our Saviour plainly intimates the Multitudes may be sadly Mistaken, and a few may be happily wiser than all the rest, when he says to his Disciples, Enter ye in at the strait Gate, for wide is the Gate and broad is the Way, that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leads to Life, and few there be that find it, Matt. 7. 13, 14. We may go, then, with the Multitude, and yet Deceive and Destroy our selves. Were the Multitude wisest, when it could be said of the Christian Religion in the beginning of it, as in Acts 28. 22. that it was a Way which was every where spoken against? Were the Multitude wisest when all Flesh had corrupted their Way before God, and there was but one Righteous Family left upon the Earth? And when the Multitude were Drown'd in an Universal Deluge for their Sins, while that only Family escaped? Were the Multitude wisest and best in the Cities of Sodom, and its Neighbours, when there were not ten Righteous Persons to be found in four Cities, and therefore all but lost,

and some of his Family were destroyed by Fire from Heaven? A Multitude, then, on our side, we may see, is no certain Sign that we are in the Right, and it is Safer to have Rules than only Presidents for our Actions.

2. Let us consider, against this Temptation, the Certain and Unquestionable Excellency of the Divine Laws. 'Tis only because Men do not understand that they at any time Despise them: And if we consider this Matter a little, we must needs conclude that they are worthy to Govern us, and to be followed in the whole Course of our Lives. They proceed from the most Excellent Being, and bear the Glorious Characters of his Nature, and tend to transfuse the same into us. *The Law is Holy, Just and Good*, as St. Paul speaks, and indeed nothing can be otherwise which comes from Him. It is Equitable and Righteous; and God requires and commands no more of us, than what we naturally owe to him; and the Psalmist very fitly said, that he *Esteemed all the Commandments concerning all things to be right*, Psal. 119. 128. As God himself is Good, so are these his Laws: He made us to do us good and make us Happy, and therefore has suited his Laws to our Interest: it is good for us to observe them, and in *keeping his Commands there is great Reward*, Psal. 19. 11. It is he has laid them upon us, who must needs have a perfect Knowledge of our Nature, and understand well what is good for us and does become us; In that *it is he that made us*; So that we cannot suppose him to have mistaken, or to have given us Laws contrary and unsuitable to our Nature when he intended to do otherwise.

Now upon these accounts there must be a great deal of reason that we should guide our selves by them rather than by the Customs and Practices of the World. These Customs may be Absurd and Pernicious, but the Observance of those Laws can never be

VOL. II. Of following a Multitude. 223

be so. Upon these accounts the Wickedness of the World must be the Madness and Folly of it; and all that Wit can say to justify it, cannot make it Reasonable, nor any Dress that can be put upon it, can make it Decent or Becoming us. But Religion and Vertue are Wise, and Honourable, and Just, however they may be condemned in the World; and the Righteous must be the *Excellent of the Earth*, Psal. 16. 3. however they may be Derided and Despised among Men. We have no reason, then, to be ashamed of, or forsake our Religion, because Fools Deride and Scoff at it. And as it is Honourable, Just and Wise to be Religious, so it were truly Shameful and Foolish, should we suffer our selves to be Laugh'd out of such a Course.

3. Let us consider, that the Generality of Wickedness usually pulls down God's Judgments and Common Calamities. The Righteous God has expressly threatned to punish thus such a Case as this; and that he can do if he pleases. The greatest Numbers of Sinners can be no Defence against his Omnipotence, but *Though Hand joyn in Hand, the Wicked shall not go unpunished*, as is said, Prov. 11. 21. When Wickedness is grown very Common, and the ordinary Means to Restrain and Cure it prove too weak to do so, when it comes to Defie Laws, and over-rule the Magistrate, then does the great Governor of the World take it to Task, Then he accounts it time for him to work, when Men have thus far made void his Laws. Thus he has done, and thus he will do, we may justly expect and fear. When a Multitude do Evil we may fear that the Vengeance of God is nigh, even at the Door; that *the Ax is laid to the Root of the Tree*; That unless there be a Speedy Common Repentance, there will be speedily inflicted common Punishments and Calamities. It is then the most Dangerous time of all to be Wicked, when the Multitude are so; and this Case, instead

Instead of Encouraging to this, should rather Deter us
 from it: Since though it may defend us from the
 Punishment of Men, yet it exposes us to the Men-
 geance of Almighty God. *Let it be seriously considered, That God has*
appointed a Day, in which he will Judge the World in
Righteousness. In that Day all things shall be called
 over again that were done in this World, all the
 Actions of Men shall be strictly examined, and a
 Righteous Censure shall be passed upon all. Then
 the Common Vogue of Foolish Men shall signify
 nothing, if the greatest Multitude of Sinners should
 joyn to justify their Evil Actions. They shall ap-
 pear before one that is Greater than all them toge-
 ther, before whom all the Nations of the Earth are as
 the Small Drop of a Bucket, or as the smallest Dust of
 the Balance. And he shall rebuke them, and set their
 Sins in order before them. He shall stop their Mouths,
 and Silence all their Pleas, as formerly they were
 wont to Silence those of his Messengers that would
 have shamed them their Transgression. Then their Num-
 ber will not give them any Confidence as it has
 done here, but they shall be ashamed and Confound-
 ed by the Remembrance of their Wickedness. And
 it is very likely their Number will then, even when
 they are all together, appear very Small and Con-
 temptible, in comparison to those who have Loved,
 and Feared, and Obeyed the Commandments of the
 World. When the vast Invisible World shall
 appear, and the Numberless Hosts of Angels there;
 who all readily do his Will, and rejoyce to fulfil
 his Commandments: And when Sinful Men shall
 be upbraided with the Obedience of the Saints, and
 the Heavens, and all Creatures about them,
 which are filled with the Will of their Creator, each of
 them in their way; which were also serviceable to
 his Will while they were obedient to him, and so were to
 his Obligations as well as Examples of Obedience.

Then

Then shall not the greatest Number of Sinners Sway the Divine Justice to Compassion or Mercy: It shall not be accounted Clemency to Spare them, because they are Many: The time of Mercy is past, they refused it when it was offered, and must now expect nothing but Justice.

5. The Multitude of Sufferers in the Eternal Punishments of Hell, will be no Relief at all to any of them. As the Multitude is not likely to deliver them from those Punishments, so neither will this at all allay or abate the Fierceness or Misery of them: Whatever a Man may think now, it will be no Ease to him at all then, to see that he Fares but as others do; That his is but the Common Lot; That many others are Undone as well as himself. And the very Companions which the Sinner now indist delights in, and joins with, in wickedness, will then perhaps be most Unpleasing to him. When the guilty Club of Sinners come together in Hell, and there reflect and consider how they hard'n'd each other in Sin, and encouraged each other to Defie the Admonitions and Reproofs of Friends, to Despise Sorrow and Repentance, how they applauded each other for their wickedness, and by this means help to ensure each others Destructions: These things will turn their former Love into bitter Rage, and Eternal Hatred against one another. What they now Boast, they will then be Asham'd of; and as every one now strives to be, or to be thought the most VVicked, then would every one be thought best, and least Guilty, and to have least deserved the Punishments which they endure. This Increase and Addition to the Misery of Hell, from the Companions in wickedness especially, seems to be intimated in our Saviour's Parable in *Luke* 16. 19, &c. where he represents a Prosperous Sinner at length thrown into Hell, and there begging for some Ease and Refreshment, but could receive none:

Then

Then he desires that one might be sent from the Dead to his four Brethren which remained alive, who 'tis likely had been Dear Companions to him in his guilty Frolicks, that they might be warned not to come to that place. VVe are not to think that there is any Charity there, or that it was so much for their Sakes as his own, that he desired to be free from their Company. He must needs know it would be an Addition to his own Misery to have them there, especially if in this Life he had been instrumental or Accessary to the Debauching and Corrupting of them by any Perswasions, Allurements, or bad Example; and they would prove some of his Tormentors if they should come there. To be sure, if it had been any Advantage to himself to have had them there, if it would have allay'd or diverted his own Sufferings, he would not have been so Sollicitous to prevent this. The sad Torments of Hell, then, we may conclude, will not be the less for many Partakers of them, as a Fire is not lessened, but rather increased, by adding burning Coals and fit Fuel to it.

Thus I have proposed such Considerations as I think are very fit to prevent Men from *Following the Multitude to do Evil*: If these things shall be well consider'd by us, and may prevail so far, as to inable us to defie at any time the Common Vogue for the keeping of a Good Conscience, and to chuse the right way, though there be but few that walk in it; we shall then be so Happy as to avoid the Broad Road which leads to Perdition, and shall take that Narrow path which leads to Eternal Life. *That we may be so Happy and so Wise, God of his Infinite Mercy Grant, for the Sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

The P R A Y E R.

O Eternal God! Great Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth! Who hast Made and dost Preserve all things by thy Mighty Power: Who art Owner and Proprietor of all:

all: All that we have and are is from thee and is thine, by common Obligations and by our own Engagements. We have been admitted into thy Church, and have dedicated our selves to thee in our Baptism, wherein we engag'd to Renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this Wicked World; and that we would, as we are naturally bound to do, keep thy Commandments all the Days of our Life. Thou art Worthy, O Lord, of the Honour and Homage of all thy Creatures, that they Serve and Obey thee according to the Capacity and Nature which thou hast given them: And thou art so Just, thou requirest of no Creature more than thou didst Originally design and fit it to perform. Thy Law is Holy and the Commandment Holy, Just and Good. It is our Interest, as well as our Duty, to Obey those Excellent Rules; We have abundant reason to thank thee for them, and to endeavour the Exactest Conformity to them. But herein, O Lord, we have a great deal of occasion to Judge and Condemn our selves. We have not regarded, as we should, the many Obligations we lie under to Love thee and keep thy Commandments: We have followed too much the Devices and Desires of our own Hearts: We have carelessly conform'd our selves to this World, and follow'd the Corrupt Customs and Practices of it too much. We have often fear'd the Displeasure of Men more than thy Wrath; and have sought their Vain, Weak, and uncertain Favour and Good Will, rather than thy Almighty and Everlasting Love: Hence have we often left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done: And we have deserv'd that thou shouldst Condemn us with the World, and cast us into Everlasting Misery and Perdition. But, O Lord, being awakned into a Sense of our Errour, we now judge, we condemn our selves before thee, that we may find Favour in thy sight, that our Sins may be blotted out, and we may stand with Comfort at last before thy Awful Tribunal, according to thy Gracious Promises declared unto Mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And we humbly beg the Assistance of thy Grace for the time to come, that we may cease to do Evil, and learn to do Well: That we may not be conformed to this World, nor at any time follow a Multitude to do Evil; that we may Mortifie and Subdue all the Corrupt and Sinful Inclinations and Habits that we have too much

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follow'd and may live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this profane World. Inable us to put our Trust in thee, while we take care to perform our Duty, and to have a firm Confidence that thou wilt take care of us. Let not any Vain or Superfluous Desires dwell in us, nor any Immoderate Love to the things of this World draw us into Sin.

We Humbly Implore thy mercy for all Mankind, that all they know thee, Love, Fear, Serve thee, and be abundantly Blessed in so doing. Maintain and Prosper thy Church in the World; let it abound in all Piety and Vertue, and enjoy an entire Tranquillity and Peace. Let them Prosper that seek its Peace and Welfare, and let its Enemies be Scattered. Have Mercy upon the Nations to which we belong, turn us from all our Crying Sins, and deal not with us as they deserve. Bless and Succeed the Good Endeavours of our Gracious Queen to promote a Necessary and True Reformation, and to defend us from all the Enemies of thy True Religion establish'd amongst us. And we pray thee Protect her Person, Prosper her with all Happiness, and hereafter let her attain a Crown of Glory. Do Good abundantly to all that have done us Good, inable us to make returns for their Kindness: forgive our Enemies, and help us to overcome their Evil with Good. Bless and Direct all that are related to us, that they may decline the Broad Road, and take the strait and narrow Way that leads to Life. Give them all that is Necessary and Expedient to them of this World, and Contentment in that, and Joy in thy Favour and Love to them. We return thee Heartly Thanks for all the Mercies of our Lives, especially for Spiritual Mercies, for thine Inestimable Love in Jesus Christ, and for the Means of Grace and the Hopes of Glory. We Pray that the Ordinances we have this day enjoy'd, may Improve us somewhat in Grace and Holiness to thy Honour and Glory. We humbly Commit ourselves to thy Mercy this Night and for our whole Lives, beseeching thee to deal with thy Servants according unto thy Mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ in whose Name we further Pray as he hath taught us.

Our Father, &c.

That

ment, that they take no notice of those many others that fall under it: They fix their Eyes upon God's Justice towards some, that they do not observe his Judgments upon others; nor will they believe or consider, that the Calamities which are in the World are God's Judgments, Proved and Applied.

Cause of it, or ascribe it to Chance; they forget the Supreme and Chief Cause of all things and ascribe their Afflictions to any thing but the Providence of God. **Learn, Pray, and Praise.** O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued and ended in thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy Mercy obtain Everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

When their heart and of the former Continuance: When the Judgments of God are abroad in the Earth, yet Men will not learn of them: they will not stand or Reform themselves who are under the Dis-

Isaiah xlv. 7.
I Form the Light, and Create Darknes: I make Peace, and Create Evil: I the Lord do all these things.

IT pleases the Supreme Disposer of all things, for wise Reasons, to permit, that sometimes wicked Men go on a great while in Sin, and grow to a great Degree of Prosperity and Wickedness before they are Punish'd; and some perhaps do escape altogether unpunish'd, in this Life: And these things; by the Temptation of the Devil and Mens Foolish Inconsideration, do encourage and harden many in Wickedness: They are so lull'd into Security by the present Impunity of many Sinners that escape Punish-

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ment, that they take no notice of those many others that fall under it: They so fix their Eyes upon God's Patience towards some, that they do not observe his Judgments upon others; nor will they believe or consider, that the Calamities which are in the World are ordered by Almighty God, and are his Judgments upon the Sins of Men. If any thing Veracious or Afflicting lights upon themselves, they blame the Folly or Wickedness of those by whom they Suffer; they look upon the next and immediate Cause of it, or ascribe it to Chance; they forget the Supream and Chief Cause of all things and ascribe their Afflictions to any thing, rather than the Providence God. And from hence many Mischiefs ensue; we fall out with one another perhaps, when we can blame nothing but our provoking Sins; we betake our selves to Unlawful Means to remove our Afflictions; we provoke God more under them, and make them heavier and of the longer Continuance: When the Judgments of God are abroad in the Earth, yet Men will not learn Righteousness; they will not Amend or Reform themselves who are under the Divine Chastisements; and so they lose all that Benefit which they might receive from them; and many times turn that Compassionate and Tender Displeasure which would Afflict them for their Good, into a Just Avenging Wrath which Afflicts to their Destruction. It is of great use, then, to prevent these things, to settle in our selves a deep Sense of what the Prophet here says of Afflictions; He ascribes all such things to Almighty God, and in his Person says,

I form the Light, and Create Darknes: I make Peace, and Create Evil: I the Lord do all these things.

By the Evil here spoken of, is meant that which is contrary to Peace, and so we must understand he means Penal or Afflictive Evil: This is in the Text ascribed to Almighty God; He is the Author of it,

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He Creates Evil: By several ways and means Afflictions come upon Men, but still God is the chief Author and Dispenser of them all: This is the Import of these words. Now since we are always in this present Life, liable to Affliction and Trouble, and the most Men meet with a great deal of it; and since the due Use and Improvement of all Affliction depends very much upon our Sense of this, That it has God for its Author: I think it highly useful to Insist a little upon this Subject.

And the following Discourse may be fitly employ'd about these two things:

1. To prove and make it evident, That our Afflictions are all sent from God.

2. To shew what Use we ought to make of this Truth.

In the first place, I shall endeavour to make it Evident, that our Afflictions are all sent from God. They are the Lot and Portion which he Assigns us: These, as well as all other things in this World, come under his Disposol. Now to prove this I account it the most Convincing, and the Shortest Method, to shew, That the Afflictions themselves, which befall Mankind, do very often declare this of themselves: It appears, as we may say, upon the Face of them: They are, indeed, very often of such a Nature, or are so attended with Circumstances, as that they do plainly own God for the Author of them. And if a great many shew this at the first View of them, without doubt a little Consideration might find the same sort of Evidence in more; and these Instances, with the Testimony of Holy Scripture, may very justly force us to believe this of all the Calamities that Afflict us; of all which in General he is said to be the Author, as in our Text and elsewhere. And our Afflictions do declare, that they have this Great and Excellent Cause for the Author of them, when they evidently bear the Impresses of his Attributes,

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which we may often observe them to do, as I shall make appear by several Instances under these three Heads.

1. Sometimes the Calamities which befall Mankind, are such as must be reckoned the Effects of an Almighty Power.

2. Sometimes they appear to have been brought to pass, and suited to the Sufferers by an Admirable Wisdom.

3. Sometimes they more remarkably carry upon them the Characters of an Exact and Impartial Justice. And in all these Cases they do of themselves, and by their own Aspect, prove that they have God for their Author. Let us consider some of the Instances which may be produced under each of these Heads.

1. They sometimes are such as plainly shew themselves to be the Effects of an Almighty Power, and then it is not to be doubted but they come from God. Such, for Instance, was that Universal Deluge which Drowned all the Old World, except Noah and his Family. The vast Collection of Waters, call'd Seas, left their appointed Seat, and were lifted upon the Earth, and mounted above the tops of the highest Hills: And Clouds, at the same time, poured down from above, Rivers instead of Showers of Water. These things could not have been brought to pass, but by the same Almighty Power which had separated the Waters which are above the Firmament from those beneath, and had made the Earth and dry Land to stand up out of the Waters: none but he that establish'd the Order of Nature, could have made this Confusion in it. Again, such an Affliction too was that which punish'd the wicked *Sodom*, and the neighbouring Cities, when four Cities were destroy'd at once with Showers of flaming Brimstone, and a Spacious and Pleasant plain was turn'd into a filthy Sulphurous Lake, as it remains to this day. Such also were the Ten Famous Plagues of Egypt, mentioned

oned in the seventh and some following Chapters of *Exodus*, as could not be Effected by any but an Almighty Power; and in them *he made Pharaoh and Egypt know that he is the Lord*, as he said he would do when he stretched out his Hand upon Egypt. For although it be said concerning two of those Plagues, that the *Magicians did so with their Enchantments*, yet no more is meant by it, than that they could follow him in some faint Imitations of what he did by *Moses*. His Power was Superior to theirs, else they could have freed their Country from the Plagues which he inflicted. And when the Dust of the Land was turned to Lice, which was the third Plague, the Magicians attempted to imitate this in vain, and were themselves forc'd to confess, that *this was the Finger of God*, *Exod. 8. 18, 19*. In turning Water into Blood, it was no great Matter for their Master the Devil to do this for them in a little quantity of Water, or to seem to do it, and delude the Sight of those who were willing to believe it truly altered: But this was Infinitely out-done by God's Instrument *Moses*, who as soon as he touched the River with his Wand, turned all the Water of the River, and all that was in the whole Nation besides, either in Vessels or Pools, into Blood. The Tradition of the Jews is, That the *Egyptians* had no Water which they could use for seven days together, but what they found by Digging; for all that was above Ground was turn'd into Blood, and the Scripture it self favours that Tradition. But that the Waters of a whole Nation should in a Moments time undergo such a Change; that the Streams of a Great and Swift River should flow for seven days together, all turned into Blood, was a Wonder worthy of God! And the same thing we shall be forced to own concerning the rest of those Plagues, if we do well consider them. Further, when the Heavens above us become as Brasse, or the Earth under us as Iron: When the Clouds pour down Immode-

rate and Excessive Showers ; VVhen the Seasons of the Year seem to be alter'd, and we have VVinters VVeather in the time of Harveſt, and ſuch as Harveſt wants in the VVinter ; When there is a general failure of the Fruits of the Earth, and every ſort of Fruit-Tree ſeems to have loſt the Vertue of the firſt Bleſſing, to *bring forth fruit after its kind* : And God does by ſuch means bring a Fruitful Land into Barrenneſs : Theſe are Effects of the Immediate and Almighty Power of God, altering the uſual Courſe and Operation of Nature. VVhen the Air, which is naturally the Breath of Life, becomes Infectious, and Spreads Noiſom and Peſtilential Diſeaſes over many Nations at once : VVhen the fixed Earth Quakes, the Solid Rocks are rent with it, the ſtrongeſt Buildings are thrown down, great Lakes are Swallow'd up, and dry Ground ſucceeds in the place of them, and where dry Ground was before, a Sea or a Lake takes Poſſeſſion ; when whole Countries ſhake at once, and at the diſtance too of a vaſt Sea between ; Theſe are plainly the Effects of a Divine and Almighty Power. Theſe Effects are out of the uſual Courſe of Nature, and far beyond the ordinary and common Force of it : So that if we do allow the Intervention of any Natural and Second Cauſes in the producing them, yet I think it muſt alſo be allow'd, that thoſe Cauſes are for the time acted and inabled by an Immediate and Extraordinary Impulſe and Motion from the Almighty Author of Nature. The Ancient Heathens, and *Hipocrates* himſelf, acknowledged in Peſtilential Diſeaſes ſomewhat of Divine, ſurpaſſing ordinary Nature. (*Boyl of Unheeded Cauſes, &c.* p. 72.) Thus do ſome Calamities prove themſelves to come from God, as they appear to be the Effects of a Divine Power.

2. Some ſhew this of themſelves, as they do plainly appear to have been brought to paſs, and to be ſuited to the Sufferers by an Admirable VViſdom.

In such strange and wonderful ways do these many times come to pass, that they will force us to acknowledge they do not come by Chance, but a most Wise Being Dispenses and Orders them. When Men bring upon themselves the Afflictions which they fear and fly from, and that by the very likely and probable means to avoid them; When their Wisest Counsels are frustrated, and their strongest Endeavours weak and ineffectual; When *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong, nor Bread to the Wise, nor Favour to Men of Skill.* These things shew, that we and our Affairs are under the Government of a Wise Over-ruling Providence. But perhaps there is not any one thing that does more plainly discover the Exercises of a Divine Wisdom in bringing Punishments upon Men, than the wonderful ways wherein Secret Murthers are often brought to Light, and the Guilty to Punishment. All Histories are full of Instances of this sort: The Brute and Irrational Creatures have sometimes been endowed with an extraordinary Sagacity to discover a Murther: Things that seemed the slightest Accidents have been ordered to this end: Yea, the Murtherer's own Conscience has often forced him to Accuse and Betray himself. The Light of Nature acknowledged a Divine Vengeance in the Death of him, who in a Popular Tumult killed *Mitius*, the Argive. When the Senate could not find out who had done this, and had erected a Brazen Statue in Memory of *Mitius*, some time after, this Statue, by no visible Cause, fell upon that Man, and so bruised him that he soon died, after he had confessed himself the Murtherer of *Mitius*. (*Plut. Mor.*)

When any Afflictions are so Adapted, and suited to the Sufferers of them, either in their Nature or Circumstances, as that they do evidently punish some Sin in them, this speaks them to be dispensed by an Excellent Wisdom: For as Wisdom does nothing

in vain, so it chuses the fittest Means to accomplish the Ends it aims at. The common End of Afflictions, if they are ordered by a VVise Being, must be either to amend the Person that Suffers, or to warn and withhold others from his Sins. And to point out the Sin by the Affliction, is certainly the best and most Effectual Means to accomplish either of these Ends: And this we may often see done. Thus it is when any are Afflicted and Punished by the very Instruments of their VVickedness: It was therefore observed by the Heathens, that *Callipus* (*Plut. Mor.*) was killed by his Companions with the very same Sword with which he had killed another Man: And *Brutus* and *Cassius*, in Despair killed them with the same Swords wherewith they had before Murthered *Cesar*. Thus, too, the Ashes of the Furnace wherein the Poor Oppressed *Israelites* burnt their hard Tasks of Bricks, were made use of to scatter Infection through the *Egyptian* Air, which bred Vexatious and Noisom Boils through all the Land, both upon Man and upon Beast. Their VVaters also, the Instrument of their Cruelty, when they were turn'd into Blood, did most wisely punish that unmerciful Edict, which commanded the Male Children of the *Israelites* to be all Drown'd. The Place and Time of the Punishment, do sometimes admirably serve to point out and brand the Sin that is Punished. At *Jerusalem* it was that the Jews Crucified the Innocent *Jesus*, and at the time of their Passeeover: It was *Jerusalem* eminently, that had killed the *Prophets*, and stoned the *Messengers of God sent to them*. And there it was that the Jews met with their final Destruction, and at the time of their Passover; then did the *Romans* lay Siege to them, and they were at once punish'd with VVar, Famine, Pestilence, and Intestine Factions and Dissentions, till at last, overcome with Misery, the *Romans* had them at their Mercy, and Slaughtered a great many Thousands, Sold the rest for Slaves,

Slaves, and laid the City in Ruins. And shall we not acknowledge, that it was with admirable Wisdom order'd to Punish the Unjust Death of *Naboth*, that Dogs did eat *Jezabel* by the Wall of *Jezreel*, the Portion of *Naboth*, and they licked up the Blood of *Abab* in the same place where they had before licked up the Blood of *Naboth*. It is said, the first Resolution for the Massacre of *Paris*, chiefly upon the Instance of the Duke of *Guise* and his Party, was taken at *Blois*, in the very Chamber where that Duke himself was kill'd fifteen Years after : And that, some Difficulties arising, they held another Council in the House of *Gondy* at *St. Cloud*, whereat the Duke of *Angjou* presided, who afterwards (being King *Henry* the Third) was unhappily Murthered in the very same place, and, as some affirm, on the same day. (*Mez. p. 717, Engl. Ed.*)

Further, When the same thing is the Subject both of the Sin and Punishment, then does the Punishment, point to the Sin ; and very VVise-ly serve to correct it, or to warn others from being guilty of it. As *David's* Pride, which would needs number his People, was punished with a Destroying Pestilence, which in three days time made their Number less by Seventy Thousand Men. So *El's* Fond Indulgence of his Sons, in their Abominable Wickedness, was punish'd with the Untimely Deaths of them both in a day: When Parents have their Children Undutiful to themselves, because they have not taught them the Fear of God : VVhen they see them likely to Squander and throw away that Wealth, in Lend and Vicious Courses which the Parents by any manner of unjust ways gathered for them : When our Dearest and most Loved Enjoyments, being Idoliz'd and Abused, are turn'd into our greatest Crosses and Vexations : When the thing ; which we would have, by any means prove our Curse and Punishment when we have them. In all these

Instances does the VVisdom of God appear, in that the Punishment is so suited to the Sin, and is so fit to correct it in the Guilty, or to prevent it in others.

3. Sometimes the Afflictions which Men Suffer, do more remarkably Express and shew a Divine and Impartial Justice, and so declare themselves to have God for their Author.

Thus in particular it is, when they do distinguish between the Good Men and the Bad; when VVicked Men are Punished, and those Good Men that dwelt amongst them are Spar'd and Favoured: As when the Righteous *Noah* and his Family were Saved in an Ark from that Deluge which Drowned the Ungodly VVorld: VVhen *Lot* and his Family were rescued from the Flames of *Sodom*: When the Plagues which Infested and Punished the *Egyptians*, Spar'd the *Israelites* who dwelt among them: When the Christians were warned by a Voice from Heaven, to depart out of *Jerusalem* before that last and Fatal Siege which involved it in so many Miseries, while it lasted, and ended in the Destruction of it.

A most remarkable Justice appears in the Afflictions Men endure, when the same things are brought upon themselves which they have unjustly contriv'd or done against others. As when the Cruel King of *Egypt*, who had commanded the Male Children of the *Israelites* to be Drown'd, did himself meet at last the same Fate, and the Glory and Strength of his Nation with him; in this Punishment did both VVisdom and Justice gloriously shine. Thus *Adonibezek* was, with most evident Justice punished by having his Thumbs and great Toes cut off, as he had formerly in his Pride done before to those whom he had conquered. Thus *Haman* came to be advanced to the Gallows which he had prepared for *Mordecai*; and his Family and Race were destroyed by the Jews, whom he in his Pride and Revènge sought to destroy. So *Daniel's* Enemies were thrown into the same Den,
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of Lions where he had been, and were speedily devoured by those Lions that had not hurt him: When the Oppressor and Extortioner to others, is himself Pinched and Oppressed by one Mightier than he: When the Malicious and Mischievous People are Universally Hated, and he whose Hand is against every Man, finds every Man's Hand against him: When the False and Deceitful are Cheated, the Proud and Disdainful are Contemned and Despised: When those that are themselves Disobedient to the Lawful Orders and Governors of Church and State, are sadly Afflicted with the Disobedience of their own Servants and Children: These things do all of them shew, that a Righteous God dispenses them.

Lastly, The Justice of our Afflictions does also evidently appear, when the Affliction overtakes the Act of Sin. For though Sentence against an Evil Work, is not always immediately executed upon the Sin, yet sometimes it is: And sometimes, though it has been deferred through a long Course of Wickedness, yet it comes at last, and in coming attends the very Act of the Wickedness which it Punishes. So *Corah, Dathan and Abiram*, Perish'd in the Act of their Rebellion against *Moses and Aaron*, the Magistracy and Ministry of their Nation; and *the Earth Opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the Congregation of Abiram*. So *Ananias and Saphira*, both of them fell down Dead in the Act of their Lying and concealing of their wicked Sacrilege. So many have been suddenly Struck with those Evils which they have wished to themselves to confirm the Falfhoods which they asserted. In the Act of their Uncleanness; some have received that Venom, which has given them a Miserable, Painful, and Pining Life for the remainder of their Days, and a Hasty Untimely Death. And some that would not be Reclaim'd by the Sickness which their Drunkenness has often given them, have at last met with their Death in it.

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Thus is God known in the Judgments which he executes, as the Scripture speaks *Psal. 9. 16.* In the Afflictions themselves which befall Mankind, there may be often seen the Impresses and Characters of Divine Attributes and Perfections: And so these appear therein to have him for their Author. And thus I have said what is sufficient to the first Part of the Discourse.

Now since it has proved, That all Afflictions and Calamities are sent from God: Let us in the next place observe what Use to make of this Truth,

I. And in the first Place, The Afflictions which we either observe upon others, or feel upon our selves, should, upon this Account, mightily Promote in us the Reverence and Fear of God. This may assure us, there is a God that Governs and Judges in the Earth, that he does from his Throne behold all the Dwellers here; *His Eyes behold, and his Eye-lids try the Children of Men.* He certainly takes notice of all our Actions, to deal with us as they deserve; and if we are not Punish'd or Rewarded in this Life, we may justly expect that we shall be so in the next. We may rationally conclude from hence, that, as *Solomon* says, *Evil pursueth Sinners,* *Prov. 13. 11.* and shall certainly sooner or later overtake them, unless it be prevented by a speedy Repentance. And the longer he is Spared, the greater and more Terrible Loads of Vengeance are reserved for him. And since sometimes God's Judgments do overtake our Sins, and his Sentence against them is executed speedily; there is no Man can be assured that this shall not happen to him. Who knows when Divine Justice will pay that Debt which is always due? who can promise himself, that the Punishment shall be deferr'd till to-morrow, which he is greatly deserving to day? Let us all, then, stand in awe of God's Judgments, that we may not Sin against Him.

2. Under all our Afflictions, we should carefully Search and Examine our selves. *In the day of Adversity Consider*, says the wise Man: and this, sure, is what we should, in the first place, Consider, Whether we have not offended God, and brought upon our selves what we Suffer. Though we ought not to Censure our Neighbour too rigidly in his Afflictions, yet we may be Severe upon our selves. Without the Censure of our selves; we are very apt to fall foul upon God's Providence, to Murmur and Complain; but it is certainly fitter that we Condemn our selves than him: Therefore the Prophet says, *Wherefore doth a Living Man complain? Let us search and try our ways.* Let us, before we complain of God's dealing with us, see if he has not much more reason to complain of our Carriages towards him in our easier Circumstances. And in the Search of our selves, we may with Humility say to him, as *Job* does, *Shew me wherefore thou Contendest with me.* Since 'tis God who Afflicts, who is Just and Righteous and loth to Afflict, we may be sure 'tis some great Provocation has caused him to do it: Or else, since he is Infinitely Good, and desires the Happiness of all his Creatures, he does intend us some great Advantage by it, which we should take care that our own Perverseness and Frowardness does not deprive us of. If it be to Correct and Amend what is Amis, that he Afflicts us, we shall find this out by a Serious and Impartial Examination of our selves: If it be for the Tryal and Exercise only of our Vertues, we shall be the more ready to apply our selves to those Exercises of Vertue which he intends, when we understand that this is the end of it: And all the while that the Trial endures, we may have the Comfort of expecting, that if we Persevere in Well-doing, this will be to our Praise and Honour at the Appearing of Jesus Christ. Therefore the Apostle *James* says, *Blessed is the Man that endureth*

reth Temptation, by which he means Tempting Affliction, *For when he is Tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, James 1. 12.*

3. When we are under Affliction, we should solemnly Repent of our Sins. This, if we do not find what we are Afflicted for, is yet very fit for us to do. We should renew our Repentance in general, and *Humble our selves under the mighty hand of God, as the Scripture speaks, and then he will Exalt us in due time.* Certainly such is our Frailty and Proneness to do amiss, that for the most part we are Afflicted to correct and Amend something in us: And it becomes us to have so humble an Opinion of our selves, as generally to conclude, 'tis for some Indulged Lust or Omission, that we are Disappointed and Vexed by the Dispensations of God's Providence. But especially, if we find upon Examination, that we have yet retained some Sin, and have lived in a Course of Evil Practice. Then should our Afflictions awaken our Sorrow for it, and revive our Repentance; Then should we speedily follow the rest of the Prophets Advice in *Lam. 3. 14. And turn to the Lord.* If Judgments overtake us in our Sins, there is no way likely to be deliver'd from them, but by forsaking our Sins: In Affliction it is meet to be said unto God, *I have born thy Chastisements, O Lord, I will not offend any more;* as is directed *Job 34, 31.* It is Vain and Foolish, and tends but to make our Condition worse, to spend our Time and Thoughts in Railing against Instruments, and blaming those whom we, perhaps unjustly, think the Second Causes of our Afflictions: We should accept of them as coming from God for the Punishment of our Sins, be most Zealous and Forward in Accusing our selves for what we Suffer, and so turn to God that Smites us. I may say as the Prophet, *Come let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us, Hos. 6. 1.* While we go on to Transgress, we may justly expect his Hand shall

shall be still stretched out to punish. If we remove some Instruments of Afflictions, our Sins will provoke him to raise up others; but if we remove those Provocations of him, he will remove what Afflicts us, and make even our Enemies to be at Peace with us. If we Repent and forsake our Sins, we shall find Mercy. And the Necessity and Usefulness of this will further appear by what I may urge in the next place.

4. Since God is the Principal Cause in our Afflictions; this Suggests to us to make our chief Applications to him for Deliverance out of them. In vain shall we use any other Means, till we engage him to our Assistance, which we must do by Repentance of our Sins, and Earnest and Incessant Prayers to Him; and this we may do by this Course. To the great Consolation and Encouragement of True Penitents, it is expressly said, *Is any Afflicted, Let him pray*, James 5. 13. This evidently shews, that he is willing and ready to *Hear* when he bids us to *Pray*: It shews he has a Compassion to his Creatures, even while he Afflicts them; and that even in his Wrath he thinketh upon Mercy, as our Church speaks. When we suffer even what our Sins have deserved, he encourages us, upon our Repentance, and suing for Mercy, to Hope for it. He says very truly, without doubt, of himself, that he *Delights not in the Death of a Sinner*, but had rather that he should turn from his VVickedness and Live: VVe must not conclude that he has cast us off, because we are afflicted. or that our Case is Hopeless, because God seems angry with us. Some, because they are not presently delivered, are apt to conclude there is no Hope in God, and to betake themselves to any manner of Shifts of their own to help them. It was a very wrong Inference, in such a Case, which that VVicked and Impatient King made when he said, *This Evil is of the Lord, Why should I wait on the Lord any longer?*

longer? Since it is the Lord that Afflicts, we should therefore wait upon him: *Wait on the Lord, and keep his Way: Trust in the Lord, and do Good, Seek his Favour still who is Gracious and Merciful: And we shall find that the Persevering Fervent Prayer of the Righteous will avail much.*

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, One God, Blessed for evermore, be all Honour and Glory World without End.

The P R A Y E R.

A Almighty and most Glorious Lord God: Thou art the Greatest, the most Excellent Being: Infinite in all Excellencies and Perfections. And all thy Works are suitable to thy self, they are such as become thee, they are full of Wonder. All thy Works therefore Praise thee O God, for they bear the Characters of thy Infinite Perfections. We ought, O Lord, to study thy Works, to observe and take notice of them, to judge of them with great Reverence, and to Praise thee for all: Make us always to believe that they are done in so much Wisdom and Equity, that no Fault or Imperfection can be found in them. And teach us we pray thee, that Humble and Patient Resignation of our selves to thy disposal which is due unto thee. Let us know that we have no Right to Contend with our Sovereign Lord, nor any Power against our Maker. That as we cannot amend what is thy Will and Doing, so neither can we resist or alter it. We must acknowledge, O Lord, if thou dost at any time Chastise us thou art Righteous in this, and thy Judgments are Just, however Terrible they are. We must acknowledge our Folly and Perverseness often needs Correction: It is like that of the Horse or Mule which have no Understanding. In our Afflictions we are perhaps mindful of thee, but before we are Afflicted we go Astray; we lose that Fear and Reverence of thee, which ought to possess us: VVe grow Proud, Injurious and Disdainful towards Men: VVe become too much addicted to this present VWorld, and forget and neglect the Happiness which was prepared for us from the Foundation of the VWorld: VVe forsake

for sake our Duty and our true Interest, and we shall Perish if thou let us alone in our Sins. Teach us, we beseech thee therefore, under all our Afflictions, to search and try our Hearts and Ways; make us to enquire with Diligence and Humility why thou contendest with us; that so we may repent of our Sins, amend our Misdoings, and procure thy Favour. And give us, O Lord, such a Sense of thy Goodness at all times, as may encourage our return to thee. Let us know, that as thou dost not willingly Afflict or Grieve the Children of Men, so thou art willing to spare, to Pardon; and to Heal. Thy Long suffering and great Forbearance towards Sinners, shew thee slow to Anger: O let us be so VVise, therefore, as to make a good use of thy Goodness; Let it not give us Presumption, but let it give us Faith and Hope in thee, and encourage our Prayers in all Distress, our Patient Attendance upon thee for Relief, and our Repentance and Return to our Duty. VVe beseech thee, O Lord, Sanctifie to us all the Troubles and Afflictions that we shall meet with in this Vale of Tears, and let them do us good in promoting our Everlasting Happiness. Let them fit us for, and increase our Desire of the Happiness to come.

VVe humbly implore thy Mercy and Favour for all Mankind, have Compassion upon the Souls that thou hast made and Rescue them from the ways of perdition. VVe pray according to thy Command and VVill, for the peace of *Jerusalem*; Let them prosper that love and seek the peace of thy Church; and as for the Enemies of it, we pray thee to abate their pride, assuage their Malice, and confound their Devices. Be Merciful to the Nations in which we live, Let piety and Vertue abound amongst us and whatever may render us well-pleasing in thy sight, and give us, we pray, the great Blessings of Unity and Peace. Let thy peculiar Favour abundantly Bless our Gracious Sovereign Lady the Queen; as thou hast given her the desire to promote thy Honour and Glory in the VVorld, give her, we beseech thee, Success in her Endeavours so to do, and give her great Increase of Honour and VVorship in this VVorld, and a Crown of Everlasting Glory in the next. Teach Inferiour Magistrates and Ministers, and all Subjects so to perform their Duties towards thee, and her, and each other, as may be to our mutual Comfort and the common VVelfare. VVe humbly recommend to thy Mercy all our near Relations,

beseeching

beseeching thee to guide them by thy Counsel, to keep them unsport from the Evil VVorld to give them what is expedient for them in this Life, and at last to bring them to thy Glory. VVe thank thee, O Lord, for all the means of Grace we have ever enjoyed, particularly for those of this day: Let them, by thy Blessing, increase our Faith in thee, our Love to thee, and our Hope of Glory, that we may rejoyce evermore in that Hope, and be patient under the Tribulations of this Life be thou, we pray thee, our Refuge and protection this Night and all our Lives, and our portion for the sake of Jesus Christ, for whom we bless thee, and of whom we have learnt to pray, saying,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, And the power, And the Glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

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